VALLEY WATERS

CHARLES D. STEWART

AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

VALLEY WATERS

VALLEY WATERS

BY

CHARLES D. STEWART

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE

COPYRIGHT, 1922,
BY E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

All Rights Reserved

HV2345
S
copy one

Printed in the United States of America

BOOK THE FIRST

VALLEY WATERS

BOOK THE FIRST

CHAPTER I

"But what *is* a penang?" he insisted.

"There now," she said, "don't let that worry you. The Major said you were to lie still and not bother about such things."

"Lie at attention, I suppose,"—and a flicker of humor came to the corners of his mouth for the first time since it all happened. Possibly it was the presence of a "real United States woman," Miss Alvord, that brought him back to this cheerful way of taking things.

In direct disobedience of the imaginary order he turned his head to one side; and having brought it to a "right dress" he took another look down the row of cots.

Who were they all? No telling. A varied crew they had been some while back—Poilu, Tommy and kilted Highlander—but they all got into the same white uniform at last. Their regimentals now were just plain bed-clothes. But they were still in rank together, standing horizontally, as it were, with four legs under them. And commanded by a Major doctor, mind you!

"But if I said *penang,*" he continued, "I must have meant something by it. And *penang* doesn't mean anything, does it?"

"You said *penang* all right," asseverated a deep, bass voice belonging to the cot at the left.

"Penang," said Miss Alvord soothingly, "was perfectly sensible. I asked the Major, and he says it is the name of a place off the Malay Peninsula. I knew that myself—only I couldn't think of it. The word was perfectly sensible."

This strange word had come to him out of a strange world. They told him he had been unconscious. But he had a distinct recollection, at some stage of the "unconsciousness," of having been down in Hell. Then, just as he was coming out from under the influence, they brought him on a stretcher down a long corridor. And all the while he was making the trip he kept singing out, "*Penang—penang—penang*"—a monotonous, rhythmical repetition which echoed like a bell through the corridor so that everybody heard him. "But how could I say a word I don't know?" he insisted.

"People sometimes know more than they think they do—only they have forgotten," said Miss Alvord. "Knowledge gets lost—in your mind, you know."

"Yes, I know it does. You can't remember anything about your first two or three years. But you must have known all about them at the time."

This seemed to lead to a new idea, and consequently a pause. Then he continued.

"Say, Miss Alvord."

"Yes."

"I guess I talked pretty crazy at times, didn't I?"

"Why, yes, certainly. You were out of your head."

"And I spoke to *her,* didn't I?"

"Certainly. You were calling to your mother."

"Well, you know now that I haven't got any mother. Never did have one. At least not that I remember. And *Mother* means something, doesn't it?"

"Indeed it does," said Miss Alvord.

"You bet it does," he asseverated. "I never knew her; but I got that out of me when I was crazy. I got the *penang* out of the same place—when I was a little more crazy. So

that means something too. It has *got* to mean something. If it didn't I wouldn't have said it."

"I wouldn't let that worry me," she answered. "Maybe you didn't mean anything at all by it. You might have thought you were playing locomotive. And that you were a child again. It sounded like that."

His eyes, deep grayish blue, again rolled round toward the nurse, regarding her strangely.

Playing locomotive! And he "all shot to pieces!"

"I never played locomotive," he answered.

"Oh, yes you did. You must have played locomotive sometime."

"And if I did play locomotive I'd say something different from *penang*. I'd say clangety-clang."

"Now don't bother about a thing like that. Ether and chloroform do strange things to people. All sorts of things happen. It makes bad people think they are religious; and it makes even priests swear—awfully. Fever and head wounds are even worse. You are getting well now. So you want to just lie here and get strong."

As Miss Alvord turned her attention to another quarter, having assured him that he must have heard the word sometime, he passed it out of mind temporarily and went back to the real problem upon which he was engaged.

It was, indeed, a strange world he had been in for a while. And the Hell was remarkably vivid for an "unconscious" one. All this he knew to have been a delusion. But in the delirious days that followed he brought forth a word that was no delusion,—a word that was stranger to him and even more puzzling than *penang*. For why should he, who never knew such a person, lie there and call for *Mother?*

He could almost hear his own voice again as he said it. *Mother!* And now that it was all over, and he was on the road to recovery, that word, a deep desire, kept welling up within him.

Formerly it had been a mere word to him, a part of the language. Now it sounded different and had a weight of meaning. Some instinct had come to fruition within him. Somewhere between the time when the shell hit him, and the time when he awoke convalescent and helpless; somewhere amid the delirium and the chloroform and the utter agony and travail of the hospital—she had arrived! And now, as a rich result of his experience, his soul reached out to her.

Who was she?—Where was she?—What was she like? It was no mere curiosity that caused him to ask this question. It was an inner demand, an elemental longing and desire as insistent as hunger and thirst. He had never looked upon her face, nor heard her voice, nor felt the soft touch of her hand. She was simply a desire. And he felt toward her, almost, as she must have felt toward him as she lay thus in bed before she had seen him or heard him or clasped him to her arms.

Somewhere, he reasoned, he must have been *born.*

With this reflection his eyes bent with new insight upon the bed.

Somewhere, in such travail and anguish as he had known, she had gone down to the gates of Death to get him. Somewhere she had lain like this and longed and waited for him. There was nothing she would not have done for him. Beyond all things she had loved him. "Greater love hath no man than this"—but Pshaw! no man has that kind of love. But now he could begin to understand it. He too had been down to the Valley of Death. And behold, his soul had brought forth a Mother!

Who was she?—Where was she?—What was she like? Now there was a problem for a man to solve, entirely out of his inner consciousness, at the age of twenty-three!

"Miss Alvord."

"Yes."

"Miss Alvord—do you suppose a person could be born in the Malay Peninsula?"

"Why, yes; certainly. That is, if one's parents were missionaries or in the British service or something like that. Were you thinking you might have come from there?"

"No. Not me."

With his left hand, the one that was free, he picked up a delayed letter from Mrs. Midgely, and after some pains he extracted from a corner of the envelope a small clipping. This he handed to her.

The clipping, a current newspaper item, contained an interesting piece of information—"It has been observed that in time of delirium a Tommy calls for his girl, a Poilu for his wife or mistress, and a Doughboy for his mother."

"Not me," he continued when he saw that she had taken in its purport. "I guess I am from the U. S. A. But I wish there had been something about that little carriage that would tell me what part of the country I was born in. You don't suppose they could have little carriages like that in other countries, do you?"

"Of course it *could* have been a jinricksha," said Miss Alvord. "Especially as you say it had its handle in front and a man used to pull it."

"A what?"

"A jinricksha—the kind of little carriages they have in Japan, you know. They answer the description exactly."

Again he had landed too far away from America. This actual and unimagined buggy had got him no nearer home than had the wild and whirling words which had left him stranded on the coast of the Malay Peninsula. He lost all interest in *that* subject, and when she had gone away he took up his problem again.

The thing that had happened to him had been wonderfully

unexpected, almost sudden. To go down into the Valley of Death and come back thus with Mother, a new tenant in his breast!

He had seen men who had suddenly "got religion." There seemed to be an instant change in their whole way of being; and he had often wondered how that could be. Possibly it was not so sudden, after all. Possibly there had been a long course of preparation for that moment in ways that were not evident and which the man himself was not aware of. And so it was only the climax, the instant when all prepared things fell together that was so sudden. As for himself, he certainly had heard a lot of the Mother doctrine since he had been mingling with soldiers and sailors. Maybe that had been working in his mind. Or maybe it was just the result of life experience, the natural maturing of his mind and nature that had made him ripe to receive her. How it was, he could not tell; but he knew very well that he had recently become a *convert* to Mother. Yes, that was the way of it.

He could see that this thing, new-born within him, was not going to pass away. He had to find her. The question had got to be answered. It was working upward from the depths. And as some men have but one object in life, and bend everything toward it, so his mission in life would be to find *her*. Not fame nor fortune nor any absorbing line of skill or art, but just Mother. That, it seemed to him, must be sufficient reward to any man for living. And that was what had happened to him. It was, indeed, to be his Holy Grail.

He would have to think hard and get a clue. He would have to break his way back into those first two or three years of life; and it would have to be done simply by thinking. If he could not do it here and now, while he was lying in bed and thinking, then there was no hope of a clue at all. And when he had some sort of clue, and had got back into the full stream of life again, he was going to get into con-

versation with all sorts and conditions of men, stirring up their early recollections. Thus he might come across someone who could piece out certain fragmentary scenes for him and whose mind would complete the bridge back to his own particular birthplace. If his own efforts did not jog his mind into the one magic recollection, he would at least start out with what he had; and he might run across someone whose mind would prove to be a window out of which he could look and see the whole of the missing scene.

In the meantime, there was Miss Alvord. Under present conditions she was the only window at his disposal. But for some reason he had not been able to see anything through her.

In justice to Miss Alvord, it must be said that when he first became concerned about the meaning of *penang,* and she refused to encourage him in such lines of speculation, she had not the least idea of what he was driving at. She did not know that he was trying to establish a birthplace in the "good old U. S. A." He had kept that secret.

In a world which has parents, and frequently alludes to them, a boy without such relatives soon learns to steer clear of the subject. It sets him down as being different from the rest of the human family. So it was with him. Because of a lifelong habit of avoiding the subject of parents, he had given her no inkling of the inner experience which was bringing up these unusual inquiries. And then, when Miss Alvord mentioned his mother, taking it for granted that he had one, it made him more secretive.

What had Miss Alvord to do with this missing part of him? With *her?* A man's mother is, indeed, a part of him. She is a necessary member of any man's life and being; he had found that out quite unmistakably. And so he concealed the fact that he had no mother quite as he might conceal a deformity or shield a missing hand from the gaze of curious eyes.

But Miss Alvord, all unknown to herself, was continually saying and doing things which broke down this barrier finally and completely. For, after all, she too was a woman, "a real United States woman." And while her intellectual store had proved rather foreign to what he had hoped to find, it was not so with her being a woman. When it came to being a woman, Miss Alvord filled the rôle in all its branches.

And so she said to him one day: "Have you decided that you want me to write to your mother for you?"

"No," he answered. "I'll write to her myself—sometime."

"But your right hand. It might be quite a while, you know."

"I'll write to her myself," he said.

"Just as you wish. But I thought that if you wanted me to I could take it down for you with my fountain pen. Then it would be on its way."

There ensued a silence as she stood beside the cot awaiting his final decision.

Miss Alvord, in her spotless white uniform, and with that look of deep and soft solicitude in her eye, was a most convincing effigy of the Mother idea in general. And there she stood, ready to listen and understand. And he, probably because he had come to the end of his little clues and felt entirely baffled, told her, in words that were none too willing, that he *had* no mother.

"You haven't! Why I thought—. Well, of course I had the idea that you wanted to talk to her, and you *have* no mother?"

"No. Not even dead," he answered.

"And all the while you were in delirium you *had* no mother? Not even dead?"

"No. But I was talking to her, I guess."

As he said this she fathomed a look in his eye which told her more than he had said. She could see that he *still* had no mother. And (a thought that took her aback) he

had been lying there and secretly delving into *her* mind in the hope of finding his way to her!

She sat down beside him.

"You poor boy!" she said.

"But some day I am going to start out and find her," he mused.

Again there was a silence. There was little that she could say. She simply sat beside him because she felt that such singular loneliness needed company.

"I am sorry," she said, "that my answers to your questions were not of more help to you. But some day you will run across somebody who knows more."

"Well, I must have known her sometime," he answered. "And I think I ought to be able to remember something that will give me a clue to her. Don't you? Anyway I might get hold of something that would be good for a start."

"Oh, I don't doubt you will. Some day you will find her. Yes, I am sure you will find her."

CHAPTER II

"Major."

"Yes, Miss Alvord. What is it?"

"I would like to ask you a question."

"All right. Ask away."

"How far back can a person remember?"

Major Holman, sometime Doctor Holman, of the town of Centralia, Iowa, put down the Centralia *News,* which had been six weeks in getting to him, and looked up. He had been very much immersed in an item in the *News* which made complimentary mention of his Aunt Hetty and conveyed the information that she had recently finished her thirty-eighth pair of white hospital socks; and he was thinking how like Aunt Hetty it was to have notions as to the kind of socks she should knit. So that Miss Alvord's question, coming in the midst of such preoccupations, and conveying no definite idea, caused him to feel that his mind needed a moment or two to readjust itself.

"How—far—back—can—a—person—remember?" he repeated, vacantly. "How—far——"

"Yes. How far back toward the beginning, you know. Does a person usually begin to remember things in his third year, or his second, or when? How far back might a person hope to go if he tried?"

"Oh. I see. You are thinking about that soldier of yours again. Your lost boy."

"Yes."

"Well now, he will hardly get anywhere bothering about such abstruse questions. Don't encourage him in it."

"But he has got to find his mother."

"Well, let him get well enough and we can send him back to the United States. And when he is in Chicago again he can set to work and find his mother."

"No he can't. He has got to find her here. That's just the point. He has got to find her in his mind or not at all. And if he can't find something about her here, while he is lying in bed, he won't have any clue to work on when he gets back to Chicago. He knows that—realizes it fully. And he is always turning to me for information. He needs help."

"Information? What sort of information?"

"Well, natural history, for instance. He wants to know about mourning doves. And today he drew this. It is the very last thing he can remember."

She handed him a leaf from a note-book on which there was a rude drawing in pencil. Evidently it was a child's drawing of a man. This child's man was notable in one respect. The man had no body. From a physician's standpoint there was an entire lack of thorax and abdomen and no place whatever for the vital cavities. Arms and legs, consisting of four straight lines, were hitched directly to the bottom of the face—two long, downward lines for the legs, and two outstretched lines for the arms. And at the ends of these lines, hands and feet were represented by marks in the form of a cross.

The Major, taking this drawing in hand, began staring at it with unusual fixity of attention. He seemed deeply interested and rather surprised.

"O Captain," he called out suddenly. "Captain Latham. Come here a minute. What do you think of this?"

Captain Latham, otherwise Doctor Latham of Paducah, took the drawing and looked it over.

"That's quite characteristic," he said. "What of it?"

"Why," exclaimed the Major, "that's the same sort of man

I used to make. I never saw one like it before. And that's it in every detail."

"Didn't you make it?"

"No. It was made by a case in Miss Alvord's ward. He had been trying to remember his mother. And the point is that it is exactly like the one I used to draw. You see it has no body. And look at those *plus* signs for hands and feet! It looked so natural it surprised me. I hadn't thought of mine since—well, I don't know when."

"Certainly," said Latham, as if the coincidence were nothing at all. "That is a characteristic child's drawing of a man."

"Without any trunk?"

"Yes. That's quite usual. Van Vechten wrote a very interesting monograph on that man some years ago. He illustrated it with just such a drawing as this. There is not a point of difference."

"But why no body?" inquired the Major.

"Well, I don't know exactly. I suppose it is because a child is all arms and legs—isn't conscious that he has a body. The face is important to him, and the rest of him is all action—all arms and legs. And he draws what he is conscious of. When the fault is pointed out he can't understand; doesn't know the difference. And that plus sign for hands and feet is quite usual. The cross seems to be a sort of natural hieroglyphic."

"That's too bad," said Miss Alvord. This with a tone and gesture which would indicate that science had done something very deplorable.

"What's too bad?" inquired Captain Latham.

"Why, my boy thought this might be of some use to him—a sort of clue."

"Did he suppose," put in the Major, "that this would be any indication of where his mother is?"

"No, not that," she replied. "He thought it might help

him to identify himself in case he got some clue to her. You see, there is a memory connected with it. He remembers that once there was a big man who found fault with his drawing. The man tried to make him understand that there was something wrong with it; and he would say—'It has no body; it has no body.' And the child could not see what it was that his man lacked. It must have been before he understood what *body* meant. Or, as Captain Latham says, before he was conscious that he had a body. So you see it is connected in his memory with some person; and he thought it might be of value to him when the time came. In case he could get some clue to his mother it might be a means of proving that he was the child. He wants her. He doesn't think of anything else. This will be a disappointment. There is so little that he can recover from his childhood that a thing like this is of great importance to him."

"Well," said the Captain, still strictly scientific, "that would hardly be a means of identification. Any child in the world might make a drawing just like that; and any grown person would naturally tell him that it had no body."

The Major, in spite of science, did not easily part with his idea that there was a strange coincidence between the soldier's early experiences and his own; and this brought him round to a live interest in the boy's peculiar problem.

"What sort of natural history did you say he wanted to know about?" he inquired.

"About the mourning dove. And especially the territory frequented by the mourning dove. He does not know what part of the country he was born in; but he thinks he remembers a mourning dove up in a tree. At present it is all a problem of locality with him."

"Why don't you see Lott the pharmacist?" suggested the Captain. "That's his long suit, natural history. Did you ever know, Major, what a natural-historian that Lott is? Natural history comes natural to him. His father was the same. I

can remember old Lott's drug-store and how I used to hang around there when I was a boy. There was a live alligator blinking in the window and a big cage of squirrels; and he had the place filled with all sorts of queer specimens of creation. He was a mighty good druggist, too. But his heart was in natural history, and his window looked as if he were the original druggist described in *Romeo and Juliet*. You ought to ask Lott, Miss Alvord. If the Major says so, I can tell him to come and see you sometime when he isn't busy."

"Do so," said the Major. "If it's going to ease his mind to learn about natural history, let him do it."

Miss Alvord, satisfied with having made a little headway, took the drawing and put it in her pocket. Not, however, until the Major, still interested, had given it another long period of contemplation.

Lott did not come the next day nor the next. Evidently he was as busy as any of them.

In the meantime, Miss Alvord became more interested in the problem. What becomes of the first two or three years of one's existence? Why does that important period drop away and become a lost part of life? And how far back might the mind be able to reach in the effort to recover it? The subject interested her principally because of its bearing upon the very serious problem of her soldier. And also, now that she thought it over, because of its intrinsic interest as applying to every human being. It was a case, not of a lost memory, but of the Lost World. Everybody's lost world.

Not having received an answer from the Major, who, having a head full of scientifically determined facts, might have been expected to hand her the knowledge ready-made, she was constrained to settle the matter by experiment upon herself. How far back could *she* remember?

After several efforts in this direction, one little memory calling up another, it became easier for her to throw her-

self back into the mood of childhood. So that one evening when she was very tired, and was thinking longingly of home, she lay down to snatch a little rest; and in this state of mind there appeared before her, with surprising and almost startling suddenness, the face of a being that she had long forgotten. It came before her as plainly as if it were a thing of yesterday, a beautiful creature with an angel face and glinting, golden hair. It was a wax doll—probably the first that she had ever owned.

And then the Tragedy! What was that awful tragedy that had brought her first beautiful dream in life to an end? She remembered now; and with the memory the pain of that parting gripped her heart as poignantly as if it had happened but a moment ago. She had, in the course of her make-believe, set her child up in its chair near a nice warm stove. And when she came back its face had utterly melted!

Yes, she had been pretending all sorts of things that day. She pretended that she had to go away, having important duties to perform. And when she came back to do some more pretending, that precious child's face had run down all over its clothes! Her infant had wept itself entirely away; and what a sorry sight it was! What an effigy of grief, what too substantial tears! And how she had cried about it. Prompted by this picture of utter woe, she broke out into real tears and loudly bewailed the loss of her child.

She must have been a perfect little simpleton (so she mused) to do anything like that. And certainly she must have been very innocent of the ways of the world not to know that wax would melt. Nevertheless, as the memory came back to her, the pain came with it; and for a moment she seemed almost to be little Tessie Alvord again. She remembered the passing of that child with—O what a sense of disillusionment and loss! All her beautiful faith in the reality of that child had been bartered away for a little

knowledge of what wax is! And she could recall how awfully she felt as she snatched it away and pressed it to her heart —the cold tallow of Joy.

But Tessie Alvord—now the important Miss Theresa Alvord of an American base hospital—was not destined to spend much time in such childish vagaries. She was brought to her feet by a moan from one of her boys; and coincidentally to the real world she was now living in. And as her mind came back to the atmosphere of the hospital, and she thought again of the grim work in which she was engaged—the moans of the wounded, the delirium of the dying, the unearthly, feline shriek of shells and the red burst of shrapnel around a field hospital where she once was—the fact that she was ever a little girl seemed a mere dream, an impossibility. In that regard, the childhood event was not years ago, but ages. And the world had grown old.

How far back a person might be able to remember she had hardly had time to determine. The incident of the doll did not link itself up with anything of importance in the world's history, and it was therefore dateless. All she could say was that it was away back toward the beginning.

Another little memory, dateless also, but much pleasanter to contemplate, was beginning to take hold of her fancy when the moan from one of her boys threw such things everlastingly out of her consideration. She jumped up surprised at herself. How could she, Theresa Alvord, indulge for one moment in such trifling memories, such puerile and inconsequential considerations, in such times as these? And from that moment, she never did. In such a world there must be no time for pleasure—not even the pleasures of memory. And to think that she had done so made her feel guilty.

But with her boy the case was all different. It was a serious matter, a real and important problem that he had to solve. And not the least of her ministration to him must consist in helping him to solve it.

Consequently, on the following day (Lott not having yet found time to call) it occurred to her that there was one item in this problem of locality which she had neglected to look into. Her boy had mentioned a peculiar two-wheeled vehicle, which, from his description of its workings, might have been a Japanese jinricksha. But he, although he could not recall its size exactly, was convinced that it was just a baby carriage built after the model of a "one-hoss" chaise.

At an opportune moment, Miss Alvord laid this matter before the Captain. He seemed to know all about infants. His father, a country doctor (as he had once remarked to her) had *had* to know all about them. And in this present matter, the son surprised her by the scope of his knowledge.

"That was a two-wheeled baby-carriage, Miss Alvord. It was one of the kind that they used in hilly countries."

"Hilly countries!" she exclaimed, mentally jumping at this clue to locality.

"Yes. You see, Miss Alvord, a carriage with a single axle and two high wheels is the *only* proper baby-carriage to use in hilly countries. It always keeps itself level. Consequently it keeps the baby level. A four-wheel carriage, in going up and down long, steep slopes, naturally travels on all four wheels. And so, the baby is half the time standing on its head or plunging forward against the dash-board. But the kind with two wheels can always be kept level, answering the angle at which you hold the handle. It turns corners more easily and goes over curbing with less of a jar; it is altogether more easily manoeuvred. In other words, it is flexible like a field gun when the caisson is removed."

"Oh, I see! And in what country, or what state, would you say they were most likely to be found?"

"In very hilly countries. In Kentucky—Ohio—West Virginia—almost any state like that."

Miss Alvord's countenance dropped as the list of states

drew itself out. But the Captain, now fully interested in his theme, went on with the details.

"I remember them in Kentucky, years ago," he said. "My father, as I believe I have told you, was also a doctor—a country practitioner with a large territory to cover. When the four-wheel fashion came in, Father was very impatient with them; and he advised the old families to keep away from them and stick to the proper kind. The only drawback of the two-wheel kind was that, with a very curious and active child, it might tip over backward if not closely watched. Such a child, standing up in the seat to look out of the little window in the back, would cause the carriage to turn a somersault. In that case the family doctor might have contusions to attend to. But this was the case only with those families that did not have dependable family servants. Mechanically they are the *only* proper carriage for hilly countries; and with a good negro mammy at the handle they were especially satisfactory. They were quite commonly used in my father's day, in the '70's and '80's and even later. And the old families, with good servants and a competent family physician—such as we had in Kentucky—would be most likely to cling to them. They were an expensive form of carriage, but good from one generation to another. I had one which had descended to me in that way; it had high wooden wheels and brass-bound hubs and leather top—altogether a fine little specimen of the carriage-maker's art."

Miss Alvord, with this great light on the matter, and recalling suddenly that her soldier remembered the carriage at a particular moment when it had *spilled him out,* hurried back to her ward and told him what she had learned.

At first he listened with rapt interest, his eyes almost shining as he took it in. But the conclusion was disappointing.

"Hilly countries," he reflected. "Then there's no use thinking of that any more."

"No?"

"That doctor mentioned too many countries. Too many states. That's no clue."

She could see that his disappointment was complete. She too was disappointed as the usefulness of this clue, this much-treasured memory, turned out to be nothing. All she had done was to rob him of any hope he might have had. And then she almost wished she had not told him.

In the afternoon of the next day Lott put in his appearance, very cheerful and willing to do his part.

"Well, Bud," he said as he sat down beside the cot, "I hear that you're a natural historian. It's a great study. And you want to know something about the mourning dove."

"Yes, mourning doves," he answered, brightening up again. "Now, Sergeant, I have seen mourning doves in cages in Chicago, and I am not certain whether this dove I remember was an actual wild dove, out in the open, or not. I have a sort of vague and poetical remembrance of a mourning dove up in a tree. It seems to have been in a very quiet and well-kept place—a public park or cemetery. It seems to me it was in a cemetery. But maybe it is only the note of the bird which suggests such surroundings. I seem to remember it plainly enough; I was standing in such a place looking up at a dove in a tree when I was very small. And I can hear it calling. But sometimes it seems to me as if it were only a dream, a delusion."

"Oh, you probably heard it in a cemetery. That's a natural place for them to nest."

"Then you would say that I have not imagined it?"

"Not if your imagination tells you it was in a cemetery. They know they are safe there. Nobody shoots at them or molests them in a cemetery. Birds are quick to recognize a sanctuary, you know. And every year they come back to it. You are likely to see them there or in the grounds of some big institution—quiet grounds like a Catholic institution, for instance, or a cemetery. But a cemetery is the

best place of all; nobody would shoot them there. And it's kind of peculiar, isn't it, that the doves should find a cemetery the best place for them. Their mourning note is so very *appropriate* to a cemetery. I am not surprised that the coincidence got you to wondering."

Miss Alvord's soldier was looking definitely encouraged. Here was something that was authentic; it was leading on. A smile passed over her face, reflecting the pleasure she saw in his.

"But," he inquired, "what part of the United States do mourning doves occur in? It's the locality I am interested in."

"Well, they're quite general over the South. And in summer they are quite plentiful north of the Ohio river—in Ohio and Indiana and round there. And so on in Michigan and Wisconsin and even up into Canada. They're liable to be seen almost anywhere—practically."

Miss Alvord's heart sank. This, she knew, was his last hope. And the bottom had dropped out of it.

"Then that's no good," he said. "It's like saying I was born somewhere in the United States. And that's no clue."

Lott, immersed in his hobby, and thinking to make his visit entertaining, kept on at length upon the subject of birds. But it was plain that the patient was no longer interested. It tired him; and Lott, upon an intimation from Miss Alvord, took his departure.

Disappointment of the deepest had again settled on the soldier's face. He had been clinging to these little vestiges of his childhood as a sailor clings to a fragment of wreckage in the hope that it may enable him to set foot on his native soil again. And now the last fragment to which he had been clinging had floated out to sea with him.

As Lott took his departure, Miss Alvord followed him to the door. "I'm sorry you couldn't help him," she said. "He has been wanting me to tell him what a *penang* is. And I never heard of such a thing."

CHAPTER III

Of his clear and consecutive memories of life, everything led back to one day in Chicago. He was standing at the edge of the sidewalk with a little pile of household goods beside him. The man and woman to whom they belonged had gone away somewhere leaving him with the rest of their property. They had been put out for not paying their rent. People who came along would pause and look curiously at him and the furniture. One thing he distinctly remembered. As another group of spectators was moving away, one man turned to another and said, "Oh, there is no danger of anybody stealing that."

Finally the man and woman came back. The woman took him up in her arms; and now they proceeded through a maze of shabby streets till they came to a long row of decrepit brown houses. Rather it looked like one long, low house with fifteen or twenty doors in it; and at the far end of the row was a cathedral. At one of these doors they turned in and went through a low, musty hall whose blue calcimine was hanging on precariously and beginning to fall off in flakes. Then they found their way up narrow, walled-in stairs to a blistered door where they were admitted by a large, strong woman. Yes, the woman said, they could stay there a while. *"He"* was not there; and maybe he would never be back again. It all depended.

In this place the mustiness gave way to a welcome and memorable smell of meat and onions boiling in a pot. The woman was much bigger and stronger than the one he came with.

In a few days, the two who brought him went away; and

they never came back again. And now he found himself living with this woman.

Ma Jones, as he then called her, took good care of him in a way, keeping everything warm and comfortable. But one day she moved. And then her name changed. And she gave him a beating for telling people what her "other name" was. And finally, one day, "He" came back—it seemed that he had lived with her before—and again they moved and their name changed.

After "He" came back, life became harder and harder. Again he was given a beating for not being able to remember his new name. He had a hard time keeping track of his new names, and especially in forgetting the one he used to have. So one day—he couldn't tell just how or when it was—he drifted away from them. He had made a great discovery. A boy could sell newspapers! He did so; and with a pocketful of pennies he bought something to eat. And then he did not go back.

For quite a while now, having made the acquaintance of an aged negro man, he slept in the stable of some rich people. It was a wonderfully fine residence, much better than the one he was used to; and he shared it with Duke and Dolly, who were very good friends of his. During the day he lived and played and did business in Chicago; and finally he became an expert in doing all these things at once on "the busiest corner in the world."

The question of a name puzzled him somewhat, he had had so many of them. He stuck to Dave, as that was what he was used to. And as another seemed to be needed at times, he took Lincoln. That was a great name in that state. The negro man had spoken very highly of it. From all he had been able to observe, people took their own names; and the negro man told him it was right.

After a while came a great step upward in his career. That was when he enjoyed the advantages of the newsboy's

home and began to pay his way. Now he laid down cash for his lodging, a nickel a night, and went to his own bed like any millionaire. And now truly he was a Man. For a long while after that he took the days as they came, rushed forth with the "latest edition," broke the news to the world in a strident voice, and was, in general, a live little corpuscle in the very heart of Affairs.

His age was very much of a question; but by counting Christmases and basing calculations on an estimate once made for him by Ma Jones, he acquired an age that was sufficiently reliable. He learned to read out of his own papers and became a master of reportorial English—which, however, he did not use in talking. Arithmetic he learned from the decimal system of Uncle Sam.

According to his own estimate of his age, the next turn in his career came when he was seventeen or eighteen. Being now of considerable stature, and having ambitions, he got a job running an elevator. And this, after a growing acquaintance with business men, proved a stepping stone to a position with the Company.

Now he was thrown in with workers of a different type; and he began to feel the lack of systematic knowledge. There awoke in him a great desire for an education. He went from newspaper reading to book reading—and this period was memorable. For about three years he led a most exciting intellectual life. The world opened up to him. As his brain had never been forced, and no subject had ever been made distasteful to him, education had all the charm of one's own original enterprise. At first, it must be admitted, he was simply emulous to appear as educated as those with whom he conversed. But he found that he also had an absorbing interest in the subjects themselves. His brain, being thirsty, took in knowledge by the bookful. He would get a text-book at the library or the book store, and, without the painful approach of study, he would simply sit down and read it.

American history was as fresh to him as the latest edition of the *News*. In a few days he would take the book back, having gathered its facts the same as if it were personal correspondence or the morning paper. He found, however, that he did not like to take some of them back; and in that case he would buy copies for himself. Finally, when the Company sent him to Michigan, shortly before the war, he had gathered a small library—writers toward whom he had a feeling of friendship and with whose minds he had found it easy to converse. Such had been the history of his life up to the time when, as Mrs. Midgely expressed it, he "went and inlisted."

Out of that life he could get no clue to his mother. As for the house before which the furniture had been piled, he had not the least idea where it was. As for the old brown row, he had gone back there once, out of curiosity; but it had been torn down and replaced by more remunerative buildings. Anyway, the one door out of which he ran away —the one door out of twenty—could have told him no tales. And as for Ma Jones and her present whereabouts, her name was never intended as a means of identification. Possibly she was dead; for she was already well along in years, and that was twenty years ago.

The clue to his mother had to come from within himself.

He again bent his gaze upon the ceiling and went at the problem. He tried to remember back as far as possible. But always, just before *she* came into view, existence seemed to fade out. Back there were three or four years. What becomes of them? Certainly a child is not unconscious for the first several years of its existence! If he could only break down the barrier and get back into that time! Then, possibly, he could get some clue to her.

It was such a different sort of remembering from any he had ever tried to do, and so evidently impossible, that he would think of giving it up. But he could not give it up.

He must have known her—possibly for a long time. For a thousand days he might have known her. And now why could he not remember? Somewhere within his mind, if they could only be evoked from the secret region in which they hid themselves, were memories which might serve as the means of finding her. If he could only penetrate this region, he might be able to recover the one magic memory which would serve as the key to everything. And so he lay there and worked away at the hither edge of that oblivion which lies behind us all.

But that Oblivion which lies behind us all, stretching back forever, seems to include or claim for itself the first three or four years of our life. Yes, we knew her; smiled at her; fumbled at her breast; grew brighter and brighter as time went on and learned to say and do things which set the household in a roar. And then came times of such incessant activity, such live living, such strange new discoveries and brand-new, deep impressions that they would seem to be unforgettable. But later on, when we are not aware of it, Oblivion reaches forward into life and says, "This much belongs to me." It is reclaimed and taken back. It is another world, and does not belong to that part of existence which men are allowed to keep.

At first it seemed to him that the only reason he could not remember was simply that it was so far back. But pshaw! He was only in his early twenties. A man of seventy or eighty will remember half a century or more. He will go into the smallest details; he will write a book linking all events together from the greatest to the smallest; and he will call it a history of his life. But it is not that, after all. It only begins at a convenient point in his recollections—possibly at his fifth or sixth year. What his eventful life was, before that, is all hearsay to him. Back there are three or four years. Three hundred and sixty-five days to the year! And every day filled with conscious activity.

But yet such a different state of existence that it finally detaches itself from the life you have lived, floats away into oblivion and becomes—a lost world.

After a time his thoughts turned again to the envelope from which he had extracted the newspaper clipping. It contained a letter from Mrs. Midgely. She had *again* enclosed one of those county history cards and insisted that he fill it out.

"Now Davie dear," said Mrs. Midgely, "do be sure and fill this out. It is supposed to be filled out by the next of kin if there is any or by the one that knows the most about him and I know the most about you but I can't fill out anything. Maybe you will say that you don't really belong to this county but you inlisted from here like others that were working here and they haven't got you down on any registration card and they want to be sure and get all those and not skip any. Maybe some other county will claim you where you was born and want to get you into their history, but you inlisted from here and I want to get you in because you were one of my boys. I have got a star in the window for you, and I knew that if you got into any battles that you would do good. I know boys and can tell the difference between them and I could see it in your eye. Now don't forget to fill this out and don't say that you never had a mother or anything. Maybe she wasn't good to you and never gave you a right show, but that don't make any difference now and you can write down the names anyway. Fill this out and send it back to me because if you don't you won't have any history. Now be sure and write this time. And don't get shot if you can help it.

Respectfully,
Mrs. A. G. Midgely.

Poor old Mrs. Midgely!—She and her boarding house!

And so she had his "star" in the window! He had become a star boarder at last. A smile came to his face as he recalled the statement of the American orator that no man will shoulder a musket to defend a boarding house. Yet somehow he had done it.

The county history card had blanks for the answers to questions:

Name	Birthplace .....
Name of father.....	Mother .....
Religious affiliation.....	Battles engaged in.....
Wounded	*Etcetera* .....

One word on this card now interested him. Why, he asked himself, had he thrown that other card so lightly away? He could not fill it out, of course. He could not even write in his own name in a way that he could swear to. But why had not this mention of *her,* so plainly printed, stopped him. There it was—Mother!

This stopped him, held his attention, caused him to look back curiously into the mind of his former self. Why, during all those years that he had shifted for himself in Chicago, had not his thoughts turned instinctively to a mother? And he a mere child!

Then he saw how it was—and had to smile at himself as he did so. The reason was that, as far back as he could remember, he was engaged in being a Man. As a street urchin, it had been his whole thought and study. It was his one aim and ideal, his only conception of himself. And what has a Man to do with a mother?

Here must have been the reason that he took to the name Mann—David Mann—when, after a short experience with Lincoln, he found that it aroused comment and caused too many questions to be asked. He had, in his early mastery of spelling, when he had to write something on a yellow slip, improved on the original Mann by leaving off an *n.* But. upon riper consideration and further experience, he put it back on again. Only to discover, when the war came, that he had given himself a German name! Sometimes he felt like amputating the *n* and going back to the broad and daring work of his youth.

As he reflected upon the natural attitude and aspirations of youth he could now see how it all was. Possibly any boy under like conditions would have done likewise. A boy at that age has little use for a mother, except in time of trouble. As for himself, when he had any crying to do, he did it to himself.

Then, as he grew older, and became more thoughtful, and

went to night school, and finally got a position with the Company and began to work his way up, it was—Well, that is what it was. "Up." Not motherward but "up." It was but a continuation of the same youthful spirit of advancement.

Always he had been "on his own." And so, when he enlisted, there had been no serious thoughts of that other kind, though he responded heartily to the good wishes of many kind ladies who had sent the boys off with tears in their eyes. He had never known a mother. There had been no fond partings for him.

But from the moment he got into the army he began to hear more and more of "Mother." He got rumors of her virtues, more especially from men in the navy who had been home on a furlough or who had just re-enlisted. What long and never-wearied eulogies of Mother—her cooking, her self-sacrifices, her hopes and fears and steadfast faith and affection. Always openly, without the least shame or any effort to excuse such unmanly dependence! Sometimes a little mixed with liquor, these sentiments were, to be sure; but nevertheless with an eye-moisture that was genuine. Something new seemed to have come over the "boys" that he had known, as if all the men in the world were willing to be children again!

But these experiences hardly affected him deeply. They left him untouched. His experience in life had been different. He had not needed a mother to pamper him. Consequently he listened but did not participate. And while this had the effect of setting him apart from their interests at the time, it made him feel more like a real soldier—more "on his own."

Something had now taken place within him; several things, in fact. And they were things that he could not very easily put out of his mind.

They had told him, when he enlisted, that the war would "make a man of him." And it had made of him a helpless,

bed-ridden sort of a thing—and in some sort a woman! Yes, he had certainly gone ahead *somehow*. Some part of him had grown and come to maturity. But he had not understood it in that way before. A *man!* All the time he had been thinking he was that, he was, as he could now plainly see, but an unripe, callow youth.

The one word printed on that card now had the power of holding his attention to the exclusion of all the rest. It stood forth and looked at him. It seemed, indeed, as if Nature, knowing that every man has *got* to have a mother, had come to his rescue and provided him with one—in delusion. All the other boys had mothers. And as Heaven has provided one such for every man, so there was but one such being for him.

Who was she?—Where was she?—What was she like? What had become of the first three or four years of his life? What, indeed, becomes of the first few years of anybody's life?

He had started out with the greatest confidence that he could go back somewhere toward the beginning and remember. But he had not tried it long, staring intently at the ceiling, when he discovered that it was not only a difficult feat of memory—but different—essentially different—from anything he had ever tried before. But it had to be done. It was the only way. And so he lay there, thinking it over.

CHAPTER IV

In the course of a few days he had rescued and brought back from oblivion two principal things. They were a tumble-bug and a strange, indescribable garden. The garden, so fanciful in its nature, he was inclined to throw out of his mind as being a product of delusion—too palpably a dream of Heaven. But the bug was plainly a thing of this world; a bug that had really existed.

He could recall distinctly a time when he was down on his knees in the middle of a dusty road. It was a bright, sunny day. Something there in the road interested him greatly and made a deep impression on him. It was a pair of tumble-bugs rolling a ball. And he could see those few square feet of road as plainly now as he could then.

The two bugs, having encountered a little slope, were having all sorts of mishaps and putting forth Herculean efforts in their task of rolling a sort of marble up a hill. It was a marble just the right size for a boy to play with; but he did not take it away from them. He was too interested.

They had a hard time of it. The marble always wanted to roll back. One beetle, on the lower side, would stand on his head and push with all his might. The other beetle, having the job of pulling on the up-hill side, would climb up on the ball and thus lend his weight to bring it over; but whenever they got to this stage of affairs the ball would suddenly make another revolution and come over on top of the up-hill bug, which would cause him to tumble off. By successive feats of this sort of co-operation and engineering, the ball went ahead by sudden half-revolutions each of which threat-

ened to be a catastrophe. Sometimes the ball did not go straight ahead but veered to one side as if it were bound to avoid them and roll down the hill again; but despite such tendencies the bugs held on and clung to every inch of their advancement. As he watched them he had an idea that the ball would get bigger like a snowball—as if he had reasoned that the bugs made it that way. But it did not get bigger.

When he recalled that scene, it was not like remembering at all; he was actually there. And he could see the very soil of his native country—the two or three square feet of it that formed the theatre of his observations. This was the one bright, vivid and absolutely authentic memory of his earliest days. That scene had certainly existed, at a particular place and moment, in the time that was away back. It was a thing of the earth earthy and not to be doubted; and, to make it all the more authentic, he could see how natural it was for the mind of a child to be taken with the sight of two bugs rolling a ball of dirt, like a marble, along the road.

And now would come a sort of experience which, during the time he lay there in bed and tried to remember, was always destined to baffle and disappoint him. He would expect, quite naturally, to rise from his knees in the road and look about him. He would begin with that sunny spot and try to observe his surroundings, and then to remember what came before and after. Thus he could find his way home to *her*.

But it did not work that way. The instant he turned his attention from that one little scene, or engaged his mind with anything but that one momentary and all-absorbing experience of his childhood, the world turned blank. Things did not connect up and go on. And the road never led home to her.

When he had persevered for some time in such efforts to think back to the very beginning, he made this peculiar discovery. Out of that life which lay back of his *continuous*

memories, there would come back to him, by a flash of recollection, some such vivid, isolated, totally disconnected scene or incident. There it would be, as bright and fresh as the colored image of a magic lantern; but there would be nothing more. It did not lead on.

This was all he could remember of the incident of the tumble-bug—simply his state of concentration on this marvelous and interesting sight. The experience must have made a deep impression on him to be so vividly remembered. And while it gave him a peculiar pleasure to still watch the bugs, after so many years, it was a trifle which he hardly regarded with any seriousness until it occurred to him (after vain efforts to make the memory lead on) that, as a point in natural history, it might possibly be the clue to some particular part of the country. Possibly, by good luck, these bugs might be restricted to some narrow section of the globe.

This was not very definite, not at all satisfactory, to be sure. But when a man, in quest of a mother, has a whole continent, a whole world, for a starting point, and when he has even been brought to pause for a while in the Malay Peninsula, it is a little satisfaction to feel that he is working the problem down to some particular clime or district.

"Miss Alvord."

"Yes. Here I am."

"Say, Miss Alvord, I have just been thinking of something"—And then he went on to describe the characteristics of a hard-working bug.

"A kind of beetle, you mean?"

"Yes."

"That rolls a ball?"

"Yes."

She turned and went away. From the manner in which she absented herself, he could see that she intended to come back bringing information.

Presently she returned and held up before him a stick-pin.

"A bug like that?"

"Yes, just about that shape."

"That is a scarab. It is the true dung-beetle."

"The kind that rolls a ball?"

"Yes, that's it."

"But how did you come to have one carved out of stone?"

"It is the Sacred Beetle. They used them for royal signet rings and necklaces and such things. A friend of mine who is very wealthy, and who travels a great deal, makes a hobby of collecting them. She gave me this for a keepsake. It belongs to one of the most interesting eras. Did you get around New York at all when you were at Camp Mills?"

"Some."

"Then did you see Cleopatra's Needle, and the four big bronze bugs that bear the weight of the shaft on their backs —one at each corner?"

"About as big as turtles?"

"Yes. That is what you might call heroic size in bugs— somewhat exaggerated. It is the Sacred Beetle. If you had looked closely at the hieroglyphs on the Needle you would probably have seen the form of the beetle pictured there too. It was a word or syllable in the language. It meant to *be* or *exist.*"

"But I am talking about bugs. The kind you see working on a road."

"Well, that's it," she answered, again holding up the pin. "The kind you mean is the kind I am showing you. There were a great many superstitions or poetic ideas connected with it. The movement of the ball, as the beetle rolled it along, was supposed to represent the progress of the sun through the heavens. The ball has eggs in it; and the time it took for the eggs to hatch out was supposed to have reference to the lunar month. And the number of the beetle's

toes or little rakelike projections—thirty—symbolized the days of the month. Scarabs are a very interesting subject."

"It sounds like a secret society," he commented.

"It was a religion," she answered. "The beetle was sacred; and some of these little stone carvings are very beautiful."

"Well, what I want to know is—Where are those beetles to be found? Regular live ones, I mean, rolling a ball."

"In Egypt," she answered.

Here his interest seemed to flicker and go out.

"Some of the early fathers of the church," continued Miss Alvord, hoping to interest him again, "used to call Christ the Scarabæus. And so did the Gnostics. So you see this kind of beetle has made a great impression on the human mind."

"A great impression on the human mind?"

"Yes. From what I have told you, you can see that for yourself."

"Well, I guess there's something in that. A couple of them made an impression on mine. But what I want to know is—Aren't these beetles that roll balls to be found somewhere in the United States?"

"Oh, yes; I have heard of them there. But I don't know whether they are very general or not."

"Then there are places where you would see them working along the road?"

"Well," said Miss Alvord, placing a finger on her lips and giving the matter thought, "they would hardly be found on the road nowadays. Not the true dung-beetle. The automobile has changed all that, you know."

If he betrayed a falling off of interest before, this may be said to have finished the work.

Miss Alvord, trying again to be interesting, thought she detected not only disinterest, but an aversion to the subject; so she took the scarab away. She left him staring at the

ceiling and trying to extricate his own two beetles from beneath this mass of queer rubbish, so unexpectedly dumped upon them. Royal signets—Egypt—the Gnostics—the automobile! How had his search for Mother ever brought him into such outlandish territory as this?

He rid his mind of all this information with as swift a mental house-cleaning as possible, and finally got his two real beetles to rolling their ball along the country road again. Wherever that was, it was the place he wanted to go to. And the best starting place for him would probably be Chicago.

From which we see that Miss Alvord had not proved to be a window. Or rather, she was one of those opalescent, light-refracting, stained glass windows—not the kind he could look out of and see what he wanted to see.

Realizing that she had somehow fallen short, Miss Alvord went to see Lott about it. It was facts that her soldier wanted—scientific facts; not this sort of ancient moonshine.

"Well, what did Lott say about it?" he inquired eagerly as she returned.

"He says they are quite plentiful in the United States."

"But where? North or South?"

"North *and* South. Practically all over. The scarab is more plentiful in the South; they like a warm country. But they occur all over, even as far north as Canada."

"Then that's no clue."

And she noted the disappointment as another bright memory was set aside.

CHAPTER V

The garden he could hardly bring himself to believe in. It was too impossibly extravagant in its setting, too utterly different from anything he had ever seen or heard of. Strange to say, it was as vivid as any of his memories, in the same partial way, and it had an atmosphere which gave it an even more dwelling hold on his mind. But when he thought it over, it too evidently linked itself up with certain other experiences which he knew to have been a delusion. It was probably a *reaction,* he thought, from the mental pain he had been in for a while, a dream of beauty which his mind had created as a relief from such awful experience. He could hardly allow himself to accept it for reality.

Nevertheless, it was so full of charm that he found himself continually reverting to it; and it puzzled him.

The beds, all formally laid out in lozenges and circles and half-moons, were bordered as by strings of pearls as big as eggs. And set at regular intervals amid the pearls were emeralds of still more mammoth size. These emeralds seemed to have come from some inexhaustible quarry of gems, for they were as big as his head and had been broken off by the sledge into the most careless facet form. They had evidently been brought there just as the workmen had taken them out of the quarry.

The flowers he could not see very plainly—not individually and definitely; he just had a general sense that they were there. But while the flowers were doubtful and vague, the pearls existed beautifully in all their milky whiteness, and even showed, upon closer inspection, that semi-translucence in which their further beauty lay concealed. And those rocks

of emerald standing forth in the full light of noon! Evidently these were calculated to monopolize attention.

Falling as they did at regular intervals along the lines of pearl, they centered his attention upon them. The emeralds he could see most vividly. He could look right into their sea-green depths—down on his knees as he did so. It seemed as if he must have known such jewels and observed them as curiously as he did the beetles. Or he could stand off and see them glistening in the sun, multifariously fracturing the light on their hammer-smitten facets. And of this dream place or garden, that was all. There was no further fact or detail; and even the flowers were none too authentic.

Except that, down at one end, there seemed to be a darker place, a sort of tunnel-like exit or entrance. This place, with its arched mouth, was overgrown with leaves; and it, too, was hung about with round green ornaments and clusters of amethyst and topaz, like Aladdin's cave. Or were they grapes? Yes, what he was *now* thinking of was grapes. And if these were grapes, and therefore an actual memory, what were those other things that he seemed to see so plainly? And how were they to be accounted for?

The reason he could hardly accept this as a product of memory was that it was too much like the usual notion of Heaven. And he, at some time during his experience on the operating table, had paid a never-to-be-forgotten visit to Hell. This garden-like place had all the conventional marks of Heaven, its walks all bordered and beset with jewels; and its atmosphere, encompassing him with a sense of infinite happiness, was the very opposite of that place of lost hope and utter ebb of soul. And so this Heaven must have been a like delusion, a dream which his mind had created as a rest and recourse from a world of pain.

But that visit to Hell! That he could hardly think of as a thing of imagination, even though he had to admit it was a delusion.

They had told him, afterward, that this experience was all due to the assistant, who had held the cone too close to his face, thus giving him an insufficient mixture of air and partly asphyxiating him. And not, as he would naturally suppose, because they were digging pieces of iron out of him. He had been "unconscious."

Such explanations might serve well enough for them. But he knew what he had been through. Personally, and with an actuality of exerience that he could never forget, he had been transported away to the awful solitude of the nethermost chamber of Hell. He found himself in the cold, gray, semi-obscurity of a deep, dank, wall-less and utterly uninhabited region. It was down, down, everlastingly away from the world. And the awful thought that came to him, as he sat in this place of banishment, was that he had been craftily done away with by those whom he had trusted, all of whom were traitors! Yes, everything that had happened to him —the giving of the chloroform and all—was but a hidden scheme. It was a scheme to do away with him, to get him down here; they had deceived him all along. He had trusted them; and this was where they had put him!

The realization of this fact seemed now to be his portion of Hell; and this murky atmosphere, soundless and sinister, existed only to communicate to him this awful fact. It was not a place of physical torture, but of thoughts that were worse than pain. It was the awful realization of this act of smiling and smooth deceit, of trust betrayed, of conspiracy and treason. And in the chill solitude of this place, whose motionless, dungeonlike air existed only to whisper it to him, he was to sit forever and *realize* it! The place was filled simply with the knowing of the fact. The evil genius that presided over it was everywhere and invisible. The Devil was a Hun!

When he found himself back on earth again, and knew that it was all a delusion when he was "going under," he

could not easily rid his mind of the experience, and especially of a deep thought it had opened up to him. What is more awful than treachery—a world that smiles and cannot be trusted? Treason, that awfullest word in a soldier's vocabulary, had come home to him with a new and deeper meaning. It could not only be death to one's country, it could be death to the world. What, indeed, were the crude torments of sulphurous flame beside the experience of living in a world where all smiles were false and no one could be trusted? A hell-world it would be, and nothing else. Somehow he had been given a new insight of the real nature of all deception and untruth. Treason was an awful thing, and as he lay there thinking it over he had a new horror of it. Or of treachery in any form.

As if by a reaction from this—a refuge and relief from what he had been through—his mind, at some time in his delirium, had created an exactly opposite sort of being from a traitor.

His Mother! His whole nature had turned and flown toward her as if by instinct. She was one who, by the edict of Nature itself, could not be untrue. She could not mistrust nor disbelieve. Nothing that *he* could do could shake her faith in him or cause her to abandon him. In his direst need she would stand by him. She was all self-sacrifice and purest love, all faith and fealty and understanding. Her very presence was an anodyne and a blessing; she was so utterly dependable. Such a being the whole world needs; and there is but one of them—to each man but one. And it seemed that, in the time of his greatest need, she had suddenly arrived, hovering over him and making her presence known.

Having created her thus, as a reaction from such experience, it was probably natural for him to create the garden, so opposite in its nature to that other place, in like manner. Therefore, he thought, it must be a delusion.

Before throwing it out of his calculations entirely, he tried to recall some incident that might have happened there. But none occurred to him. The place was a mere atmosphere instead of an incident—a place where all sorts of pleasant things might have happened and seemed likely to happen again. But as there was nothing to identify it as a thing of this world, and as it was simply the opposite of his imagined Hell, he decided that it would have to be classed among the delusions and thrown out of his mind as the possible source of a clue.

While this was now its standing in the realm of reason, the place continued to haunt his imagination, soothing him with its atmosphere and insisting upon the reality of its emerald and pearl; and it seemed to him that if he were ever to find his mother, it would naturally be in some such place as this. And in such a place he would go walking with her.

As he could make nothing out of such a vision, he resolved to stick to things that were plainly memories. And now, with a sharp eye for the actual and the real, he would turn again to the baby buggy—that two-wheeled affair of a kind that he did not remember seeing since the day he fell out of it. And which, as a matter of fact, he did not remember at all except in connection with that one moment. Closing his eyes, he could see the two-wheeled buggy standing on its head while he looked up at it from a grassy slope on which it had spilled him out. He had stood up on the seat to look out of the little oval window in the back—he could remember that window—and in doing so he *must* have planted his feet on the wrong side of the axle, thus causing the carriage to turn a somersault and throw him out on the mercies of a hard, hard world. The catastrophe had left its mental mark. It had photographed itself as a great and surprising event. But while he could lie on that slope and look up at the buggy and see it just as it was—a sort of contemplation to which

his present position in bed seemed favorable—there was nothing more. He could live that moment over by the hour. And it never got to be anything more than the one continuous moment.

The mourning dove continued to puzzle him; and the more he thought it over the more he was inclined to look upon it with suspicion—possibly it was not a memory of his youth. The reason for this feeling was that he had seen such birds in the window of a bird store in Chicago. The bird, therefore, was *not* an exclusive memory of his youth, and as he thought it over this fact confused him.

But when he let his mind fall into that state of dreamy recollection, he knew well enough that it was some particular bird in some particular tree. Yes; *his* bird was sitting in a tree; it had a nest up there. It was a large tree in a grove or parklike place that was all very ominous and quiet and well-kept—somewhat the atmosphere of a cemetery.

Here he was doubtful again. Such an atmosphere and setting for a dove was all too romantically appropriate. Did he really remember the dove? Or was it a conventional concept which he had gathered from the regions of poetry? He had been thinking a good deal about cemeteries lately. But no—the bird was a reality of his mind. As he listened he could hear it calling again with a soft and melting sadness. It was his bird. And it brought back that beautiful day when he was standing somewhere *looking up*—somewhat as he was now lying in bed looking up. This might be worth clinging to, after all, and inquiring into.

He could not remember seeing the bird very plainly; it was not a visual memory. There was just the mournful note and the magic atmosphere of the place. So that the dove, as an authentic memory, stood somewhere between the tumble-bug, which he knew to be a fact, and the vision of Heaven, which he felt to be a mere poetic creation. There seemed to be various degrees of certainty, a blending off of fancy into

fact. And so it is no matter of wonder that, in this struggle between the actual and the half-remembered, between a most vivid but uncertain Heaven and his wholly imagined Hell, he felt as if he had got things "all mixed up." On the one hand was the world of ether with its too real delusions, and on the other the world of wakefulness with its proneness to dreams and fancies and its past leading off gradually to Oblivion. Linking the two, and seeming to belong to both of them, was this feeling of new Desire. In this confusion, he must somehow find his mother; he must reconstruct and remember—it was the only way. By thinking he could surely make progress; and sometime when he sent the dove forth it would find a place whereon to set its feet.

Progress while lying in bed is a state of affairs which, presenting itself to a young man, is nothing more or less than a contradiction in terms. There was little to do but lie there and let Nature tend to her knitting; and to him she seemed very slow about it. Pending the time when she could disentangle the skein of life and get it rearranged, she expected him to lie there and wait. But wait for what? Not to get back to Chicago; for he could see that there was no starting point there—no clue to be followed up. There, too, it would be simply a case of memory.

And so he would again have on his hands the mourning dove and the tumble-bug, the garden and the baby-buggy and the lawless and outlandish *penang*. These were the only remaining vestiges of a lost world. And the only material out of which to build a new one.

CHAPTER VI

He had lost a lot of blood there at the Argonne; and they had supplied the place of it by filling up his circulation with salt water. It would keep his arteries from collapsing, so they said. But however that might be, salt water coursing through the veins is not very hearty and sustaining.

He had heard, or else he had read somewhere, that back in the beginning of things, when man's predecessors were starting to evolve, the living organisms were of so low a degree that the blood in their veins was simply salt water—the medium in which they swam. And so man himself could trace his lineage back to a time when his life-blood was the sea.

He did not exactly believe this sort of stuff—it hardly accounted for life as he was now aware of it; but anyway the doctors seemed to have worked along that theory in his case and been quite successful. At least, the salt water seemed to have worked all right in him. And now, lying there in bed, with only the blank ceiling before him, and this problem of his own beginnings to be thought out, it seemed almost as if he were starting Creation all over again. And strange to say, whenever he exerted his mind to the utmost, it seemed to have its start in a garden.

But he could not break into oblivion except around the edges here and there. There were vivid little memories, photographs of a moment, springing out of a timeless past and telling him, by their very nature, that they must have been the observations of a child. This was encouraging and made him keep at it.

He soon discovered, however, that these little visions of

the past could not be evoked from their hiding places by any mere process of logical thinking—any ordinary act of remembering. They came best when he got himself into a mood—a dreamy and imaginative mood like that of a poet creating. This was not very satisfactory to him; he had had enough of delusion and was on the lookout for facts.

But the reason for this became evident to him as he thought it over. A child's memories are not consecutive like those of a man; and as they are not confirmed and fixed by association with affairs in general and thus linked up like history, there is no use going back and trying to follow along from one event to another. They are mere impressions, new sensations—surprise, wonder and fear leaving behind them vivid pictures of the instant. And these impressions of the child, a Christopher Columbus of the universe, are crowded out by new impressions and growing knowledge. And then, as he begins to deal with the world of reality, they pass away. It is only the impressions which left a mark on the brain too *deep* for time to erase that can come forth thirty or forty years afterward and hold up their pictures before the eye. And when he does recall them, they are not things which a man would consider of importance; so that he is at a loss to know why such things were retained and others passed away.

A man may remember historically—by association of events and the inward record of his progress, logically, from one thing to another. But the child's memories are simple and absolute and must come forth solely by themselves. It is a record, not of himself acting upon the world, but of the world acting upon him—his curiosity, his wonder or his fear.

The soldier, in his present situation, lying helpless on his back, staring at the ceiling, and wholly in the care of a woman, was very well circumstanced to wander back into the realm of childhood and explore that other world of being.

His very weakness, and the springtime feeling of the convalescent, seemed designed to help him get back there by a dreamy act of memory. This reflection gave him hope. Now was the time to do it, while the desire was new upon him.

But really it was no use. Thinking back to the raveled edges of his memory, he would always come to a nebulous, dissipated state of affairs with here and there a totally disconnected happening floating in the air like fragments of a once bright world. And in between was a mere nothingness of time and things. It seemed to him, repeatedly, that he ought to be able to seize one of these ancient moments and construct a past and future around it as around a nucleus of time. He ought to be able to rise from his knees in the road, where he had been watching the tumble-bugs, and look around him. Thus he could build up his early childhood again. But the rest of that day was gone. Memory had let go of it so long that it had dissolved back into that eternity from which he had so recently emerged.

Had he really lived in those first three or four years of life? It seemed not. And yet these little surviving memories showed him that he had. There had been something to fill every hour and minute; but when he seized upon one and tried to think what happened next the world would seem to have come to an end. And when he made a further effort to remember, his mind would leap the void and light upon some other little incident of which there were so few; and in between would be a vacancy that might have been of months or of years. It was like trying to recall a word that had never been in his vocabulary.

These little pieces of existence, remaining from the life of three or four years, were the only evidence that he had been living in the world at all. And he could only marvel what had become of his early childhood—of anybody's childhood. How far back can a person remember?

After many efforts, always ending in bafflement, he saw that that part of his life was gone. In his infancy he had not really lived, or else he had forgotten. He had done his best to find his mother.

"Well, how is the Mother coming along?" asked Miss Alvord. "Have you thought of anything new?"

"No. There isn't anything in that. It's no use."

"Oh, I wouldn't get discouraged," she replied. "Some day you will think of something."

"Do you think so?"

"Oh, yes. Some day you will. Something will give your mind a jog—get it into the right line—and then you will get hold of a clue. And you can follow it up and find your mother. I feel quite sure that you will."

"Well, maybe. It seems as if I ought to be able to remember something that was of some *use*."

BOOK THE SECOND

BOOK THE SECOND

CHAPTER I

In the valley of the Muskingum, the "Hudson of the West," there is a country of such peculiar charm, and such lasting hold upon the affection of its inhabitants, that it has furnished the American traveling public with a phrase. That phrase, whose meaning we are about to gather, is—The Man from Zanesville.

The purport of it is that, wherever you may go in the length and breadth of this Republic you are sure to run across someone, of more or less distinction, who lets it be known that he hails from those parts. And his fellow citizens in other parts of the Union—wherever he may finally have settled—never fail to ask you whether you have met Mr. So and So, "the man from Zanesville." The phrase is attached to him quite as if it were a distinguished title or a part of his name; and the seasoned traveler, from meeting him in so many places, and learning so many things about the valley and its people, has come to regard him as a sort of omnipresent personage with whom one feels acquainted beforehand.

Thus the title has come to stand for a deep-seated sort of patriotism, not especially boastful, but of the kind that is proud of its history and enamored of the very soil from which it sprung. And the American traveling man, catching the point in it all, has taken it up with fond humor and given it currency throughout the land. It is a sufficient introduction, a letter of recommendation, an assurance that there is

going to be familiar gossip about a busy and beautiful part of American soil.

The valley is famous, not because it has sent forth its sons and daughters in such overwhelming numbers (though it has done much to settle the farther West and furnish leading citizens for new communities), but simply because of this trait of fond remembrance for the place. It would seem that anyone who has spent his childhood amid its scenes, and whose imagination has become impregnated with its meanings, is always turning back to it in fond reminiscence; and thus his fellow citizens come to identify him with the place of his birth and always refer to him in that connection. So that the valley of the Muskingum has become famous from being so much loved.

The Man from Zanesville, as we have already remarked, does not boast about the place of his origin or speak of it *simply* with pride. That is only part of his attitude toward it. He may even go so far as to admit that it is a "leetle slow" and inclined to be behind the times. In all matters having to do with present progress and a grand future he is a stanch adherent of the new agricultural or commercial country in which he has become a leading citizen. But he turns back to the Muskingum in fancy; he makes it the subject of reminiscence; he mentions scores of others who came from there (whom you probably know); and, like an ancient patriot proclaiming "I, too, am a Roman," he never fails to let it be known that he is a man from Zanesville.

You gradually discover that he loves it. You get a pleasant sense of the sort of patriotism that he seems to stand for—that fundamental patriotism which simply cannot break its allegiance, and which, in spite of prosperity in other parts, is always and everlastingly true to the land of its birth. He is as much a part of his country as are the boatloads of useful crocks and jars and jugs that go floating away from it by way of the Muskingum, or the fine art

pottery and mosaic tile that translate its soil into more beautiful forms—all of them, like himself, the tempered vessels of Muskingum clay. And periodically he goes back to it to refresh his soul amid its scenes and, in general, to give himself a drink. All the way, going and coming, he never ceases to be The Man from Zanesville. For the blue Muskingum is the only navigable river in Ohio. And Zanesville, the commanding metropolis at the head of its waters, stands typical of the valley.

It is a place of waterfalls and limestone caves and high, rocky shores; of roaring mill-dams and brooding lime-kilns and swanlike steamboats that go swimming amid the hills; of river-carved scenery and wide views and pennyroyal slopes, odorous and steep; of ancient covered bridges roofed over with shingles and with windows looking out upon the river; of dug roads winding along the sheer faces of hillsides up out of the valley, and of sidepaths with hillside stairs that take you up on top of quiet summits where you look out upon the congregation of hills, and call out to them and hear them answer as if they knew your name. It is a place of coal mines and clay pits and quarries; of roadside potteries where the potter still throws his lump upon the wheel and causes it to rise up straightway into a jug, deftly drawing his thumb from the hole; of fiery glass-houses where you may look in and see the swift glass-cutter pursuing his tinkling trade; of the homeward-trudging coal-miner just emerged from that hole in the hill with his torch still smoking on the front of his hat, and, at his heels, the big yellow dog that draws out the little cars of coal. Withal there are many negroes driving dump-carts or drays and lending to all this atmosphere of Northern industry the happy, carefree abandon of the South. And the Man from Zanesville, just back for a visit from his home in Kansas or Nebraska or Iowa, looks upon it all and is glad. For these are the sights and scenes of the Carboniferous Era—of a land where the coal

lies in a streak just next to the clay that is to be baked and the iron that is to be melted. The Man from Zanesville stops, you may be sure, where the yellow smoke is curling out of the top of a kiln and takes it in with eye and ear and nose; for he, too, is of the Carboniferous Era and has never felt quite at home amid the flat, alluvial plains of the West or the mere moundlike, glacial hills.

It is probably the home-comer from the Western plains, where Nature is just a wheatfield, spread out beneath the blue, who stands once again in the midst of things with the liveliest sense of being welcomed back. Out there on the plain the wealth silently grows; Nature is privately engaged in a chemical reaction; her processes are secret and invisible and she only speaks to you in a whisper amid the corn rows. But here the forces of Nature are visibly up and doing; she has gathered her strength in the streams of the valley and set to work making things outright with all the smoking power of the hills.

The Man from Zanesville, being back again, goes first of all to the middle of the famous Y bridge, which spans two rivers at once, and stands there a while to listen to the roaring of the dams. This is the voice of the place, rising above all other sound. It roars in a certain key; the two dams mingle their tones in a certain harmony; it is a voice that he was familiar with long before he had conquered the mysteries of English.

When a man has been born within earshot of an all-prevailing sound, has lived in it day after day and been put to sleep by it night after night through all the years of his youth, he does not feel quite natural when he gets out of it. It has become part of his life. Wherever he may go he finds that it goes with him, still murmuring in his memory. It is for this reason that the Man from Zanesville stands in the middle of the Y. He listens once again to the voice that never changes and never stops. He reflects that it is

the very sound he was listening to thirty or forty years ago—It has just been clinging to that selfsame note from that moment to this. His ear is as much at home in its sound as is his eye with the procession of the Muskingum hills; and prolonging as it does the sound of other years, as if the same immortal moment were still going on, it brings everything—his infancy and youth and young manhood—back to him.

From this place he looks upon the old familiar scene; and standing at the exact center of the Y he has the advantage of seeing it always in the same old aspect. Down the river, deeply set in its green frame of hills, he sees the *Valley Queen* splashing her way along. Pretty soon she will call out her greeting to the city; and he bends his ear to listen. Presently a white banner of steam flaunts up from her whistle, and the next moment the sound of it goes echoing like an organ through the hills—a deep and vocal diapason that reverberates from hill to hill as if each were a separate pipe tuned to the one vast instrument. And when the Man from Zanesville hears this familiar voice again he knows for a certainty that he has been welcomed home. To him it is the music of the world.

The charm of the place is no doubt due, on the scenic side at least, to the two rivers rushing so strongly to meet each other in the center of the city. And to the intimacy with which the steep and strongly marked hills enclose the place and seem to stand guard over it.

And then the permanency of everything! It is such a country of up-hill and down-dale that it is all nooks and corners and special footholds where each man's house seems to be ensconced in a place specially provided for it by Nature, and where its own special surroundings are warranted to endure. In such a place, houses may change; but localities never. Each vale and hillside and ancient dug road keeps on from generation to generation with its accretion of human history, and holds it there as in an atmosphere of its own.

Here such a thing happened, and there another—all marked out permanently by the metes and bounds of Nature.

And on the human side, much has happened. There on the edge of Zanesville Thomas J. Hendricks was born; over in that part of the valley Garfield taught school; just over the line, in Perry county, is the little, high-perched house in which Phil Sheridan spent his youth; on yonder rounding hill Sunset Cox was born. And it was amid such scenes as these that "Sunset," quite naturally, learned the warmth and splendor of his speech.

But it is doubtful whether any mere enumeration of facts can pluck forth the secret of the place and explain the hold it has upon the people of southeastern Ohio. The fact that the Man from Zanesville has become a tradition, and that he is personally known to so many in all parts of the Union, must stand for itself. We may take it for granted that there is sufficient reason for his warm attachment to the valley. And as our business is to tell a story, and not merely to describe a locality, we must be getting on with our tale.

CHAPTER II

Leading up out of the valley of the Muskingum, there is a dug road which seems to aim at the summit of a high jutting hill or promontory, and then, instead of going clear to the top, follows along the shoulder past a cemetery.

To the left of this road the dug bank is so high as to shut off all view of the cemetery. Thus you might drive nearly past it without discovering that it was there. Only the grassy edge is visible, rambling over the top of the clay-faced cut; and this wild fringe of grass gives no intimation that up there on top is a beautifully parklike and well-kept city of the dead.

To your right, as you drive along, the land falls away very precipitately into a valley, at the bottom of which is a little brook or "run." From this little brook or run the land again rises steeply to the skyline of a higher hill from the abrupt brow of which (though you would not suspect it at this distance) you can see right down into the valley of the Muskingum itself, steeped in the roar of its mill-dams, and look out upon a still wider prospect of river-cleft ranges of hills.

In order to get into the cemetery, you have to drive past it. The reason for this is that the steep clay bank to the left forbids entrance quite as well as it shuts off the view. But you continue to go on and up—your attention turned always, of course, to that engaging minor vale upon the right. And as you go, the bank keeps diminishing in height, until—the road now having ascended to the level of the surrounding country—you reach the farther corner of the cemetery where the big arched gate is located. Here you discover

what you have been passing; but as there are big forest trees at the gate, and little burying, the fact comes upon you as unobtrusively as possible. Here there is no reminder of mortality except where, in a big circle of graves with their feet all pointing toward the center, some comrades of the Rebellion lie sleeping as if about a camp-fire. And in the middle of the circle, their monument—a cannon.

Even this scene is mitigated with a certain feeling of life and action; for the fieldpiece, standing there on its two wheels, seems ready for instant fray; and the soldiers, so naturally disposed about it, seem to have lain down to await the morning, with the green earth blanketing their forms.

It is a pleasant drive along the countryside; and the advantage of it is that the casual traveler, who has no business with a cemetery, and wants to have none, has no cemetery thrust upon him. He has passed it before he knows that it is there. And when he has reached the arched gate, and it finally dawns upon him that that stray fringe of grass along the road is part of so beautiful a place, he stops and looks back in pleased surprise. He feels as if he had been let into a secret of the country. And the chances are, unless he has business on hand, that he will stop to consider the scenic invitation now spread before him and go back through the arched gate to see all that he has been passing.

If one is in the mood, it is quite worth while. Located on a hill amid hills—which is quite different from being merely located on a hill—Woodcrest cemetery makes a place of secluded but parklike beauty of its own particular eminence. And though cemeteries, usually, are not only solemn places but formally depressing, the scene here is such as to present the dead in a high, sylvan retreat. Nature, in the Muskingum country, has such strong features of her own, such little hills and hollows expressing a live and diversified mood, such intimate nooks in which to share her secrets, and such big, strong trees to keep the upper hand of man's park-

making propensities, that the cemetery here seems to be the most natural thing in the world.

The hill, with its flattened but rolling top, projects out from the general level of the country and faces the valley with a declivitous front, a sort of airy promontory or heavenly peninsula; and at the gate, where the prospect is most forestlike, the smooth gray drives and winding walks lead off amid the trees in a way that invites you in. But if the traveler is thinking of time rather than tide, and has some great matter of profit and loss to attend to, this cemetery will not interfere with him in the least. He will be confronted with nothing more than the dug road, with its excavated side to the left, and a spacious prospect, hilly and human, to the right.

It is the scene to the right, rather than the cemetery, with which we are now concerned. And especially two human habitations which cling to the side of the road as if they had climbed up the hill with the express purpose of being across the way from the cemetery.

The whole available frontage of the cemetery—which is to say, all that steep slope and dip of valley and further acres running up to the sky—constitute the two Watson places, homesteads brought into existence about the time of the Civil War by the two brothers, James and John.

The families of James and John have always been Presbyterian. From occupying the same communal hill with the dead, or by some other effect of atmosphere and topography, the two places give the impression of being a place apart, a neighborhood in themselves. This, in truth, is what they were—the family demesne of men who had found in this corner of the landscape an atmosphere allied with something in themselves. And feeling themselves at home in it, they had built their houses where they could live in close communion with its high and solemn beauty.

From their well-kept front yards, which reflected in some

particulars the formal gardening across the way, their land sloped sharply away to the aforementioned little brook or run, whence it rose gradually till its boundary was the sky. Thus their farthest property was held up before their eyes like a picture leaned against the wall—a depiction of orchard and quarry and green hillside with an ever-brooding lime-kiln shining red at night or sending up its pillar of cloud by day.

Whether it was some propinquity in the Presbyterian nature, together with a love of natural yet formal beauty, which drew the brothers to this spot, or whether they simply had an eye to those useful back acres with their limestone ready to be quarried, their clay ready to be made into brick, and even an outcropping of coal (the deserted shaft of which still makes a black spot upon the hillside) one who was not acquainted with them would be very much at a loss to decide. But to those who knew James and John, it was apparent that the choice of a home-site had to do with a great many things which were, at bottom, all one thing.

Across the road it was always Sunday. And inside of James and John, in spite of their workaday garb and their plain, practical, common-sense occupations, it was always Sunday, too. They were no mere Sabbath Christians. Their lime burning, and brickmaking, and clay-bank working were all done in the eye of heaven, and with the knowledge that the Lord was always looking down. And listening. This life was but a probation and a preparation for the more beautiful life beyond. And in this regard their purely practical back acres, leading the mind off into the sky, were quite expressive of them. They, too, reached out to the very boundaries of things and aspired to the eternity ahead.

The brothers were just as moral as they were monetary, as poetical as they were practical; but "spiritual" you would

hardly call them. No, not spiritual. They were too solid and horny-handed for that. They were too intimate with earth for such an impression to break through. They were simply religious with the religion of their fathers; and, withal, not lacking in a vein of true poetry which responded to the beauty of "the David psalms" on the one hand, and to the beauties of nature on the other.

The house of John is that which you come to first. At this point the dug bank is still high enough to shut off the view except from the second-story window. And to this was due a peculiar feature of John's life.

When he lived below, he had none of the surroundings of the cemetery. But when he went upstairs he could look out upon the cemetery as from a lighthouse and speculate upon matters of time and eternity. As he used his house according to this system, and as he was given to periods of Bible reading and solemn meditation, anyone could tell what mood he was in by observing whether he was above or below. If below, one knew that he was plain John Watson engaged with the problems of this workaday world. If above (where he was likely to betake himself of a Sunday afternoon) one knew that he had sought the upper level to look out upon the cemetery as upon a different world and spend a while in the higher planes of thought.

Farther along, almost opposite the gate of the cemetery, is the house of James, now occupied by his daughter Alida. As the high bank here dwindles away to nothing, and as the ancient trees of the cemetery have been preserved and there is little burying near the entrance, it is, perhaps, the choicer location of the two. With the formal and yet forestlike air of the cemetery, and the military touch given by the circle of soldiers with their cannon, it is very much like living across the road from a park. And as the valley has here become narrower and much shallower as it rises to join the

general level of the country, the land next to the road is flattened out so that the house of James has an ample front yard.

This advantage of location has resulted in a considerable flower garden, all formally laid out in winding walks with borders of white, translucent stones from the river bed, and big, jewel-like chunks of green glass from the glass-house set along at regular intervals. It is always well-tended, as if emulating the scene across the way; and certain little evergreens, which grow up flat as a fan, and look, indeed, like trees that have been pressed in a Bible, add to its primness and extreme respectability.

CHAPTER III

Along with these poetic and religious qualities, the Watsons inherited a deep family pride. They had a constant sense of the highly respectable—and here we draw close to the idea that actuated them in settling where they did.

They were not building for themselves alone; they expected to raise families. This, no doubt, was the dominating consideration when they pitched their habitations across the way from a cemetery. It was a neighborhood in which children could be brought up in the way they should go.

But if James and John had an idea that the imminence of a cemetery was going to exercise a solemn and restraining influence upon the minds of a family, this theory was somewhat altered in the mind of James at least, by the time the Lord had blessed him with seven daughters.

The seven Watson girls resembled one another only in their irrepressible girlishness and their abounding high spirits. They were delightfully various both in themselves and as compared with one another. They indeed presented so remarkable a diversity in one family that, as a town wit remarked, Nature seemed to have in mind, in making them, that there must be "girls to suit all tastes."

When they had arrived at the age when they were still sliding down hill with the boys, and getting up hilarious straw-rides and skating parties (and yet insisting upon added inches to their skirts) and withal becoming so romantic that any fine afternoon in summer would show the whole group of them out in the hillside orchard telling their fortunes by means of apple-seed—which revelations always had to do with the subject of marriage—the influence of the cemetery

may be said to have become *nil*. They minded it not. And on the most eerie evening that the graveyard ever conjured up, their merry laughter drowned the croaking of its frogs and quite outvoted the sentiment of its one foreboding owl.

The Watson girls were so different from one another in height, complexion and mental inclination, that the collective sisterhood, so obviously not inheriting from their parents to any marked degree, seemed to hark back to a long line of ancestors. It was as if the strongest and most persistent types of past generations had suddenly asserted themselves in the Watson strain and found representation in the one family of girls.

Certainly there must have been, among those people of the past, some wild Pict or dashing Cavalier with coal-black hair, else there could have been no such girl as Sally, who was not pretty but handsome. There must have been some gentle, unselfish and fair-haired maid, else there could have been no Ruth. Some one of the ladies of the past must have been bright and quick in her answers, else there could have been no Sue—the shortest of all, as if Nature knew that wit should be put up in small packages. And certainly some must have been of strong and lasting fibre, else there could have been no Watsons at all. And when one contemplated James and his wife, and saw that this whole theory must be true, the Watson girls seemed more than ever to be a family gathering from the long-forgotten past. Or a picture gallery showing the ancient line of Watson in all its girlish youth.

Of these, Alida was the youngest but one. Undoubtedly, to have produced her there must have been a branch that was long refined, a high-bred race of women who were born to art and music and silver service—possibly a Lady Watson, who, in addition to her rare and delicate type of beauty, had manner, grace and charm. She was so evidently of the type that the rest of them took her in that character from the first. When she was just old enough to share in

the household work, it was observed that Alida wiped the china and set it down with a hand that was somehow artistic. And they united in declaring that she even fed the chickens with an air and manner of her own.

Unlike the dashing and engaging Sally, who would rather pitch stone into the lime-kiln than go to school, Alida took to certain of her studies, at least, and followed the true feminine path while the boys vied with one another in carrying her books and walking home with her. Unlike Sue, when she had grown old enough to attend the seminary, she did not always stand at the head of her classes nor graduate with signal honors. But—also unlike that nut-brown maid,—she was not addicted to *freckles*.

About Alida there was something Southern, and not to be accounted for by the latitude of southern Ohio. She had that perfect clear complexion, then so highly prized by Southern belles; and with it a certain dwelling quality of speech, rather short of a drawl, which harmonized with the pleasant languor of her manner and brought out the musical quality of her voice. Whether this was inherited, or whether she had picked it up in that part of Ohio where the drawl of the South just begins to manifest itself, it were needless to inquire. In any case it was natural to her—native to her temperament—the one thing needful to complete her charm.

By all the counts that go to make up that unattainable quality, Alida was the patrician of the family. And, true to prophecy, as set forth by the appleseed in the orchard as well as by the girls themselves, she became a reigning belle and married a man of means.

All of which is a mere background of time—a little glimpse into the history of a house which, with its rows of square, white pillars, its ancient grape-vines shading the porch, and its garden walks outlined with pearl-like pebbles and glistening glass, still stands and looks upon the road as if it expected them all to come trooping back at any moment.

Since the houses were built—one before the Civil War and the other shortly after, when John got back from the Army of the Potomac—many of the Watsons have "moved across the road."

For this contingency the two brothers made early preparation. At the time they acquired their homestead acres they also looked over the lots in the cemetery, and after careful consideration of its topographical features they selected two sites which particularly suited them. They were on an elevation much nearer the house of John than the house of James; and they were so situated that when John went aloft he could see them plainly from his bed-room window. Thus, whenever a Watson died, John or James or some other member of the family could sit in that lookout and keep watch of the lighted lantern.

The well trimmed lantern, shining by night over the grave of a Watson, during the first week of his interment, was a family custom which was kept up regardless of whether latter-day conditions made it necessary or not. Some said that it was not—that the medical schools at Cincinnati now had other ways of obtaining material for study so that they no longer molested respectable people. While this might be so, Alida, with certain memories of her girlhood in mind, would have been the last to abandon the practice. And her cousin John (who had now inherited the house of his father) was of a like mind with her.

It was a superfluous precaution, no doubt; some different set of conditions in the country at large had made it no longer necessary. But while all this might be true, the facts were of no force as affecting the custom which the Watsons had adopted. It was now a tradition, a beautiful custom of too long standing and with too many solemn associations for them ever to want to change it. Alida's father and mother, the original James and Katy, had been buried in that way, as had two of her sisters; and so had Cousin John's father

and mother (the original John and his wife) and the little brother who had died shortly after the Civil War—all of them, in fact, whether they died at home or were brought from afar to be buried there. They not only felt that this was the way to bury a Watson, but they looked forward to such burial themselves, secure in the knowledge that, for a week after their passing, they would be sat up with, and watched, and lighted on their way.

The lantern, at the time this story opens, had last been called into service when the elder John died. And as Alida and her cousin John were now the only homekeeping members of the family, and respective proprietors of the two houses, she insisted upon relieving him of the watch on alternate nights. But he, stoutly arguing that it was his *own* father that had died, and that none but a son should have a say in this affair, got the long-neglected lantern down from its peg in the granary and shined it up scrupulously; and then, sitting at that second-story window of the house, kept watch from dark to daylight for a week. And always, when the night seemed long, and his head was heavy, and morning not yet quite come, inspiring himself with an inward listening to those words by Bowring, which, through long use and general consent had become recognized as the family hymn—

Watchman, tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn.
Traveller, darkness takes its flight;
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watchman, let thy wanderings cease;
Hie thee to thy quiet home.
Traveller, lo! the Prince of Peace,
Lo, the Son of God is come.

CHAPTER IV

The Watson sons, unlike the daughters, were great homekeepers and true to the land of the Muskingum. And the girls, though they had followed the fortunes of their husbands and wandered far, were great homecomers. And in the end they had, so far, come back here to stay.

So that Cousin John, who was in many regards a duplicate of his father, would remark with some satisfaction as he walked among the tombstones of a Sunday afternoon, "Well, we are all here, anyway." To which he would conscientiously add, with Cousin Alida's tragedy in mind—"All but one."

And that one!

Cousin John, living so near Alida, and seeing her continually, and knowing her every thought and mood, was not likely to forget that "one."

It was another case of the ninety-and-nine and the one that was lost. And no doubt there would have been more rejoicing in the two houses if that "one" had been recovered, and the long-time burden of suspense and doubt lifted from Alida's soul, than if one of those whom they *knew* to be dead had been brought back to life.

That one was Alida's boy, little Gilbert, who had disappeared when he was barely four years old. But now no longer little if, indeed, he were still living.

Alida had accompanied her husband, Ramsay Orr, on a trip to central Texas. He had gone down there to look over some land investments.

One day the little boy, a great favorite with the men on

the ranch, was missing. At first the search for him was not very widespread; it was supposed that he had simply wandered away on the prairie, or had lain down in some out-of-the-way place and fallen asleep. Or—a theory which lost them much time that afternoon—it was possible that one of the men had taken him up on the saddle for a ride and then gone farther than he had expected.

When he was not found in the immediate neighborhood, they pinned their faith to this chance. But when darkness fell and the last man was in, there was no Gilbert to be seen; whereupon, thoroughly alarmed, they all turned out and hunted through the night. And on the next morning, Alida being now almost beside herself with the awful suspense, began a search which, while it kept holding up new promise every day, availed them nothing. Finally, a long while after, arose the theory of the "crazy woman" who might have taken him. But this conjecture was too late in being born. She had disappeared and could not be traced. And besides, this was but a theory. The theory grew as time passed; but the boy was never found. It was of little use except as an alternative to pronouncing him dead; and active search had been given up years ago.

Between Alida and Cousin John, this element of her existence—her present state of mind toward it—was seldom brought up or referred to. It was a matter which was too well understood between them to be a subject of discussion. At no particular time in the passage of the years had she stopped hoping. How could she, not being certain that he was dead? Upon several occasions, with long intervals between, Cousin John had got enough insight of her mind to know that she clung to the possibility of his return. And the whole background of her being, to him, was that forlorn hope.

From being held to for twenty years, the hope had turned into a sort of faith. But it was a faith so tenuous, so

hazardous, that it could hardly stand examination in the cold light of reason.

Possibly he was *not* dead. Maybe some day, by some means, he would find out who he was and come back to her. Such being the case, how could she, his mother, say that it was not so? No mother could. And so she had to believe it.

It was this long, tragic experience, together with a later turn in her life, which accounted for her living out her years in the old homestead—now shrunk, in her mind, to small and almost cottage-like proportions. As for Cousin John, who inherited the substantial brick house of his father, along with his mental and physical traits and his pew in church, it was natural that he should be living in the house of John. But as for Alida living in the house of James when she could as well have had her more sumptuous residence in town, that was no mere matter of course, but the outcome of her inner self.

CHAPTER V

Of all the girls, Alida was probably the only one who, with means at her command, would have done what she did. When Ramsay Orr died, and the last blow seemed to have befallen her, she gave up her town house, with its more sumptuous furnishings, and came back here to live. She knew the old place from the smallest details of the house to each separate tree of its furthermost acre; they were second nature to her; and these things of her girlhood, with their old familiar countenances, teeming with pleasant memories, and holding forth the promises of her youth, took on a new actuality to her—as if the interim had been but a dream.

Many of these old things she did not displace in finding room for certain things of her own. She preferred to have them as they were, from the square piano in the corner, whose unchanged and familiar voice still spoke to her in music of the past, to the rosy-lipped conch shell beside the fireplace, still whispering its secrets in the ear as it had to the seven sisters—strange rumors from the sea of time! It were better, she said, to live in this place, where she had always been used to looking forward with hope, than to live in that town house to look backward and repine. It was a sort of beginning over again; probably more of sanctification of the past than a forgetting, but yet a beginning over.

Which, in view of the things she carried in her heart, was strength of the rarest kind. She was a slight and delicately bred woman, not entirely lacking color but with a fine, cameo-like sort of beauty softly framed in hair of becoming

gray—still harmonious in the new sort of beauty which the years had brought her. So far as her demeanor betrayed, or anything in her attitude toward the world, Alida might have been living all her life amid the quiet surroundings of this house,—a setting harmonious to her middle age—quietly ripening and undergoing little in life beyond the softening touches of time. She was still the Alida of yesterday, in many ineffable ways; but after life had made something deeper of her beauty, and time had powdered her hair. The world would little have suspected, from anything she said or did, that there had been any battles fought and won.

Alida, after all, was strong. In such power of inward living, and the facing of life as it is, there is an unseen fortitude of character, a fine spiritual fibre, which we are always surprised to find in natures so seemingly fragile. She did not lose her active interest in "affairs" but took a hand in the management of her estate and paid her more personal attention to the running of the old homestead, which she had now bought.

CHAPTER VI

While the lost boy was a subject now seldom mentioned between Alida and her cousin, it being a theme that went on entirely outside the realm of words, the World War brought a change in that regard.

With the oncoming of the war, the home guards began to fill up with new volunteers looking forward to the call. Every afternoon they went forth to drill, passing out by a certain street on their way to the drill grounds. Without uniforms, without guns, without a sound of music at their head—silently except for the muffled footfall on the country road—they went marching along to their destination. To Alida, there was something more impressive, more deeply moving in this silent daily passing than in any mere "military" spectacle she had ever seen. It was the very spirit of war, arising from the dust and moving fatefully on.

As they had none of the accoutrements of war she could not yet regard them as soldiers. They were just boys—young men of the age that *her* boy would have been.

Every day she went out and watched them pass. She took note of them, one after the other—this one from the pottery, that one from the machine shop, another from the farm. Some of them were lax in their carriage; others were stooped as from bending over their work. Most of them had the complexion of the shop also, lacking as yet the hard bronze of war. And their clothes were of all sorts. But how wonderfully they marched!

In this regard they had already become something new and different; surprising and admirable! Her individual contemplation of them was always swallowed up, finally, in

this rhythmic movement of the whole. And her compassion toward them as mere boys gave way to a pride in their united strength. They were an army. Already they had the footfall of an army—all the more impressive from being done silently and without music, like veterans on their way.

"If Gilbert were with us now—and living—he would be among them," she said.

"Yes, he would that," said Cousin John very emphatically. "Indeed he would that."

"I should feel terribly to have him. But he would."

"Yes, he would. And so his great-uncle John would."

Every day she went forth to see them pass and keep note of their progress. And after a while she had ceased to look at them critically or individually; she had become lost in the powerful, machine-like swing and fall of their feet on the country road. And Cousin John, always aware of what she was thinking, knew that amid the swish and swing of their marching she could hear the footfalls of one whom her own heart had sent forth. As time passed he saw it more and more. Her Gilbert was with them—marching silently.

When the first unit was called out, she went along with the others to see them off on the train. It was a trying and glorious and confusing time—an incongruous time of forced cheerfulness and boyish enthusiasm and parental tears, of shrieking whistles and muffled sobs and flags and handkerchiefs. Cousin John, noting Alida, saw that she was much moved; but she restrained herself wonderfully. And by the time those whistles blew and the train moved, *she* was weeping too.

From that time, Alida became a great newspaper reader. This was a new development in her. She had done most of her serious reading in books. Heretofore she had simply kept in touch with local news and looked over national matters in a general way. But now she subscribed to a large metropolitan daily and seemed to find a first-hand interest in

every detail. She followed those "boys" everywhere. She knew what was doing on all the fronts; as Cousin John said, she knew "as much as a man"; and as she read with such live, personal interest, her memory was remarkable. She did "nothing but read and knit and knit and read."

The large daily for which she subscribed was one which covered the casualty lists in a general way. When these national lists began to make their appearance, she found a new line of interest. She scanned all the lists carefully, state by state, looking for the name of Orr. In lack of finding that she would look among the first names for a Gilbert; and having found one she would pore over it as if even *that* might hold some fateful content for her.

For if her boy had been stolen—the theory to which everything seemed to point—he might still be living. If living he would surely be in the army. In that case, he might be engaged in any of those battles. And if he were (here Cousin John agreed with her wholly) an Orr would be very likely to distinguish himself. He might distinguish himself greatly and receive honorable mention. Or he might be killed or wounded.

As any of these things was possible, and, in the deeper promptings of her heart, quite probable, how could she, his mother, say them nay? She could not. The house of James had taken its part in the Civil War. The very atmosphere of the place was steeped in the traditions of patriotism. And how could this house sit here through another war and have no part in it? It was not natural. It had been used to distinguished service. In view of all which facts, how could she do anything else but "knit and read and read and knit"?

CHAPTER VII

One day in the spring of 1918, it being the very day upon which a new contingent of selective service men had left for camp, and the usual impressive scene of parting had taken place, the tenant's wife, who brought up a large family on the Orr back acres, was surprised to receive a social call from Alida. The mistress had come bearing presents on her arm.

"It is slightly yellowed, Mrs. Liggett," said Alida, handing her a roll of fine cambric, "but a few hours in the sun will bleach it again."

"Oh, Mrs. Orr! How good and kind of you!"

The spirit of the gift was not lost upon Mrs. Liggett; and neither was the quality of the goods. She noted the fine uniformity of the weave by drawing the fabric over her left forefinger, which, being roughened and darkened from much tattooing with the needle, bore the true badge of the hand seamstress.

"That kind of goods was made before the war, Mrs. Orr," she commented. "You can't buy any such goods nowadays—not even them that has the money to afford it. It looks quite old."

"Yes; it's quite old," said Alida.

"But new!"

"Yes. It's very old. But new."

Mrs. Liggett, standing up and spreading out an arm's-length with an eye to the bleaching, seemed now to comprehend that it was time alone, and much lying in the dark, that had changed the cambric from its original perfect white. Whereupon she sat down suddenly and gave herself over to gazing at Mrs. Orr.

"It was for *your* baby!" she exclaimed.

"Yes," said Alida.

"Oh, Mrs. Orr!"

The tenant's wife was one of those women who seem to have been built for utility alone. She was tall, gaunt, sallow, and of the kind inelegantly described as "slab-sided." And as for soulfulness or any medium for expressing inner beauty, a pair of greenish gray eyes was all she had. But in this moment of deep and level looking, the greenish gray and the regal blue met on a plane which made them equals.

"Oh, Mrs. Orr, how *good* and kind of you. To think that you should give *my* baby this! I know it must be quite a sacrifice."

"Well," said Alida, "we have all got to sacrifice something. Everybody should think of something to sacrifice, these days." And then (as if by way of apology to her own conscience) she added—"It was a piece that I had never made up for him. So it is not quite so much of a sacrifice—not so much personal association, you know. I bought quite liberally when he was coming; and as it was intended for a baby in the first place your baby might as well have it."

The truth was that, having just seen another lot of the boys go away, she had come home feeling that she too ought to make a sacrifice—ought to give a part of herself at least. In this connection she went to a bureau drawer which was always locked, and looked over that infant wardrobe. It was all of *her* boy that there was left. And so, in lieu of himself, it was the most difficult thing for her to part with. To give away any of those things that he had *worn* seemed almost impossible. And then, thinking of the little creature who had recently come naked into the world on her own back acres, she saw what she should do. These little dresses would hardly fit him at present even if she were inclined to give them away. But here was this length of fine cambric, and this fine lace and all the trimmings. She had

kept them all together. And so she compromised on that.

The advent of this gift caused a great sensation in the Liggett household. When each of the four children—the four that went afoot—had been allowed to hold a corner of it; and when it had been rescued from them because all eight hands were dirty; and when an end of it, with a part of the lace judiciously laid on, had been held under the baby's chin to show how he would "look" in it, Mrs. Liggett put her infant back in the cradle in order to indulge in a more thorough appreciation of the fabric. Whereupon the baby, who had already become used to riding upon her left arm while she coped the whole of creation with her right, set up a lusty cry. And immediately became quiet again when Alida took him up and nestled him to her.

Mrs. Liggett, in her first enthusiasm over the goods, had not paid sufficient attention to the lace; so now she began appreciating its quality.

"It's just *lovely,*" she commented. "And so thoughtful of you to bring the trimming and everything! I never expected to have such beautiful goods."

To this Alida did not reply. She was occupied with looking into the eyes of the infant, which (it struck her strangely) were *exactly* like those of her own little boy. A not extraordinary circumstance, as we might here pause to remark, when it is considered that the eyes of *all* infants are blue; and this quite regardless of whether they are finally intended to be greenish gray or yellowish brown or any color whatsoever. A sort of milkish blue, as if Nature were determined to make them alike in this one point of beauty. Which might serve as another prop to the still struggling theory that all men are born equal.

But Alida was hardly thinking of this scientific fact just at present. Those milky, mild eyes made a wonderfully personal appeal, and carried her back instantly to another little countenance of twenty-four years ago. For the moment it

seemed to her that she was looking, not into eyes that were similar, but the very same ones. Which, again, might not be far from the truth when we consider that these were not Liggett eyes, but the temporary baby eyes which Nature had struck off as usual from the universal mint. And so, in a sense, the very eyes that her own child had been furnished with.

Seeing that her visitor had become rapt in a mood, Mrs. Liggett did not break into it. She sat and waited. And then, casting her eyes in the direction of an old cracker box near the stove, she found something else to attend to. In the middle of the box, from which there came a continual chirping of little yellow chicks, there was a stone jug filled with warm water; and this jug, as Mrs. Liggett determined by loosening its woollen cover and holding her hand on it, needed to be revived with water from the kettle.

When she had unwrapped, and refilled and wrapped it again, and returned it to its place, she sat down to pay attention to her visitor. But she had no more than got seated when she rose suddenly and went to the door.

"You Johnny and Mary! Let that robin alone. Go on away now. Can't you see that she is trying to build a nest?"

A short distance from the house, and in view of the open door, a pair of robins, with more trust than judgment, had started to build in a lilac bush; and Johnny and Mary, together with the less responsible Sidney and Jane, had drawn up close to watch operations. Meanwhile a much distressed robin, homeward bound with a long wisp of hay, sat on a fence-post with her building material flaunting in the breeze.

"Go on away now," continued Mrs. Liggett, seeing that she had got them started. "And look at what your pup is doing. Take him along too; and don't let him bother them little pigs."

Mrs. Liggett's attention was now directed toward a ma-

ternal looking porker comfortably palleted upon several armfuls of straw and surrounded by a low barrier of boards beneath which her litter, when they were not climbing over her, ran in and out; thus furnishing a new opportunity of mischief to the pup.

"They're always into something," commented Mrs. Liggett, returning to her chair.

Whereupon the chicks, having discovered the new source of warmth, ceased chirping in the box; the hog, with a comfortable grunt, turned over on her side; and the robin, with her case tended to, proceeded with her nest. But the baby, who had been nestling comfortably in Alida's arms, began groping about for the source of his dinner, and, not finding it, set up a cry, which made it necessary for his mother to take him again.

"And when it isn't them it's the pup," added Mrs. Liggett. "But a dog is awful nice for children to have. It's lots of fun for them."

When she had finally got everything attended to, and had taken precautions with the cambric by folding it up as well as the use of one hand would allow, she again sat down and turned her attention to the visitor.

"Mrs. Orr," she said, "I don't suppose you ever did get over thinking about that boy."

"Well—no. Not in the sense that I could ever forget him. Naturally not."

"Now long ago was it, exactly, that you lost him?"

"He would be twenty-four this summer. He was not quite four when he was lost."

"That's a long time, Mrs. Orr—in some ways. When you're bringing up children, Mrs. Orr, twenty years seems a long time to look ahead. Especially when you've got to be watchin' them and raisin' them every minute of the day. But when you look back, twenty years is just like yesterday."

"Yes—just like yesterday," said Alida. "For twenty

years it has seemed just like yesterday. And now he would be twenty-four. But he never grew up. It was just that quick."

Mrs. Liggett, feeling that there was something here that she had not caught, looked at her visitor doubtfully.

"How quick?" she queried.

"It was the war. And the call for soldiers. And the young men—the boys—drilling. And the company going away. And all about his age. You see, Mrs. Liggett, during all these twenty years I have always had him in mind in that black velvet suit. It was a black velvet suit with skirts. It had gold buttons down the front. That was what he wore last. And for twenty years he had been just that way in my mind. People do not grow older in your memory, you know."

"Oh,—I see," said Mrs. Liggett. "That's so. When anybody dies—a little boy or a young person—they always stay the same age. And you always think of them that way. Dead people don't grow older."

"But my boy is not dead," corrected Alida. "Not necessarily. I do not know that he is dead; and so I have never thought of him that way. And for twenty years he has been the same—the little boy in the black velvet suit. And then the war came."

"Yes, I see. That's what you mean by it being quick. He grew up!"

"Of course," explained Alida, "I had often thought of how old he *would* be. But I never really thought of him that way. It was the little boy that I had lost. And that was the picture that I always had in mind. And then the war came—and the call for the young men. Just boys! And suddenly—in an instant almost—I saw that he was grown up. He was twenty-four. Ever since then I have been thinking of him in that way. And then I felt that the little boy was *gone*. Not dead, you know—because he would be gone

even if he had lived with me and grown up. He was like those soldiers—all of them gone to war. And then my little boy in the velvet suit seemed to pass away—to grow up. Instead of being real he was only a memory."

"I see," said Mrs. Liggett. "You always had the little boy in mind. And then you lost him in the war."

Alida regarded her for a moment with a look of surprise.

"I suppose you might put it that way," she answered. "I really began to *think* of him as being grown. And now I *do* think of him in that way. Except that—of course—I have never seen him."

"And now you can't imagine what he is like at all!" said Mrs. Liggett. "He has grown up and you have *lost* him again."

"Hardly. It is easy enough to see him in soldier clothes—in khaki. He is a soldier. He is just like the rest of them. He is as plain that way as in the black velvet suit. Possibly he looks like his grandfather—or his great-uncle John. That I can only imagine. I can see him in a way—and at the same time I cannot."

"Sort of like a ghost!" commented Mrs. Liggett.

"No, like a soldier. And now I prefer to think of him in that way."

"You mean, Mrs. Orr, that if you could have him back again you would rather have the soldier than the little boy that was lost."

"Yes; I believe I would. I would naturally have wanted him to grow up."

There was a short silence. And then Mrs. Liggett, seeing an opportunity, launched into a more gossipy phase of the subject. Evidently she had been thinking of it for some time and was awaiting her chance.

CHAPTER VIII

"Mrs. Orr, didn't you try an awful long time to find where your boy was? Maybe two or three years? And didn't you spend lots of money trying to get him back?"

"Yes, we did," said Alida.

"That's what I was telling Mrs. Banks and trying to make her understand. She was over here to call on me the other day, and somebody had been telling her about it. And she claimed that no crazy woman could ever get *her* child away from her. Especially if she had a rich husband and plenty of money to look for it. And she said she just couldn't understand it. So I says, says I, 'Some crazy people are pretty smart. I had an aunt that was crazy, and nobody would ever know it that was a stranger to her—not unless she got right onto talking about the things she was crazy about. And then she could tell it in a way that would make you believe it. Some of them are pretty deep and cunning about what they do; and you can't always get ahead of them, no matter how smart and rich you are. In some ways my aunt was the smartest and most educated one of the family. And she was full of tricks that you would never think of.'

" 'Well,' says Mrs. Banks, 'smart or no smart, no crazy woman could ever get away a child of *mine* where I wouldn't follow her and get it back. Especially if I had lots of money. Mothers are pretty smart too,' says she. 'Especially when it comes to their own children.'

" 'That's just it,' says I. 'That woman that stole Mrs. Orr's little boy was a crazy mother. She was crazy about her own child that she had lost. And she was pretty smart. She was a poor crazy woman—poor and lonesome—down

there in Texas; and she was all wrong in her head about having a little boy. Sometimes when she saw a nice little boy she would take him home with her and think he belonged to her. And then his mother would have to go and get him back. And after people had done that to her a couple of times, she got pretty smart about trying to keep her little boy. She got to be just the same as its own mother would be if everybody was trying to get it away from her. You're right, Mrs. Banks, about mothers being smart,' says I. 'Even animals are smart that way. So I guess a woman could get pretty smart about keeping a child—especially when that was what she was crazy about.'

"'Well,' says Mrs. Banks, 'I can understand that easy enough. I can see how the woman might take the child and get to be real smart about it. What I mean is that they ought to a-been able to find her. Somebody would notice that a woman had a child that she was crazy about; and so they would be able to trace her up and find her no matter where she went to.'

"'Well, Mrs. Banks,' I says, 'who is going to say when a mother is crazy about her child? Ain't we *all* crazy about our children? Suppose they did send out a lot of detectives to find a woman who seemed to be crazy about her child? And suppose they found a woman taking good care of a child, and talking about everything it said and did, and wiping its nose and not letting it out of her sight for an instant, and then they arrested her because she acted *suspicious!* Land sakes! I guess they would be arresting about *all the mothers in the United States!* And besides, Mrs. Banks,' says I, 'that woman wasn't crazy about anything else. She was crazy about not having a little child. And when she had one that satisfied her, I guess you wouldn't think she was crazy at all. Nobody would a-known my aunt was crazy unless you struck some subject where she was different from the rest of us.'

" 'Well, as far as that goes,' says she, 'I can see that it might be hard to find her just *that way*. But all the same, if any woman ever stole a child of mine I would follow her up and get it back, crazy or no crazy. I would get it back some way.' "

Mrs. Liggett paused in her long flight of *says I's* and *says she's* (her most usual form of making conversation) and looked to Alida for reply. And when Alida said nothing, she promptly inquired: "Wasn't that woman that stole your child a cook?"

"Yes," said Alida.

"That's just what I told her. 'You must remember, Mrs. Banks,' says I, 'that that woman was a cook; but they didn't find it out till quite a while afterwards. She had been used to cooking among men—on steamboats and in camps and all such places. So after she got a good start out of that little place in Texas, there was no telling where she would be. She could have got a job on a steamboat and went up north. A cook can go most any place. And they usually do. Or she might have been cooking away off in a lumber camp again. Or out on some ranch in Texas where they hardly ever see a newspaper. Or maybe she went to some big city and was cooking in some old kitchen back of a saloon where nobody ever pays any attention to lost children. And do you suppose that just because she had a child and was acting like a mother to it, anybody would think there was anything strange about *that?* And as for it's being a rich child, Mrs. Banks,' says I, 'you can't tell anything by that. Lord knows, all children look alike when they get themselves *dirty* enough. And they all do about the same things. There ain't any rich and poor among *them.*' "

Alida, feeling that something should be added to this statement of the case, replied, "And besides, we did not know that this woman took him."

Mrs. Liggett received this information in open-eyed surprise.

"Why, I thought you *knew* what became of him! Of course I never knew anything about it except what I've heard. And that's the way it was passed around."

"We did not know *at the time,*" answered Alida. "I know it now—or at least I feel quite certain about it. But not in a way that can be proven. And so I don't know, really, what became of him.

"The crazy woman that you heard about lived about twenty miles from our place, on the outskirts of a little town. By the time a theory had been formed, and the theory got back to us, three weeks had passed. We immediately went to work on the theory; and we found that the woman had been in the town where we were about the same time. And it was about that time that she seems to have disappeared. And there has been no trace of her since. She simply disappeared."

"If anything like that happened to one of mine," continued Mrs. Liggett, "I believe I would just go crazy. I mean I would feel like you did—not real crazy. But worse. I don't believe I could ever get so that I would be satisfied with some other child and think it my own. But I can see how the poor crazy woman felt about it."

"Yes," said Alida.

"Because," added Mrs. Liggett, "as long as you don't know he is dead you can't give him up. I have heard—though of course, Mrs. Orr, it is none of my business—that you think sometimes that he might still turn up. And you imagine he has gone to the war. And you made out some kind of a will so that if he should ever find out he belongs to you he will get the money."

"As long as I do not *know* he is dead, I cannot give him up entirely. How could I?"

"That is just the way any of us would feel, Mrs. Orr. If

anything happened to one of mine—and I have got five of them—*You Sidney Liggett!* What in the world is that child going to be into next!"

Sidney Liggett, just tall enough to reach up on the kitchen table, had easily found something to be "into." It was a cup of molasses which had been set out with the intention of making ginger-bread; and Sidney, trying to taste it, tipped it over and spilled the greater part of it down the front of his frock. Mrs. Liggett, with the baby on her arm, made a one-handed operation of dampening a cloth and trying to get it off; and had added trouble in getting him to stand still long enough for the work to be completed. Having removed the worst of it, she conducted him to the door with the free hand; and then used one foot to push the pup gently over the threshold and start it out after him. And having boosted the baby up higher on her shoulder, and stirred the potatoes which were frying for supper, she stooped over to inspect the boxful of chicks and again try the temperature of the jug.

Mrs. Liggett, if she were really to attend to all the varieties of mothering which her place in the economy of nature required of her, would have needed the arms of a Briareus. And since the arrival of the new baby she had the use of but one. Except when, as in the case of the pup, she made skilful use of her foot.

When she had straightened up with the intention of resuming her visit, she found that the interim had brought her another caller. Sidney, in his comings and goings, had left a trail of cracker crumbs from the outer world into the front room; and a Shanghai rooster, having got on the trail, was following it up. So far he had reached the middle of the kitchen and was pecking away at a feast on the floor.

Mrs. Liggett went at him forthwith, shooing at him in a large and general way. Whereupon the rooster, instead of having the foresight to go out by the way he

came, chased about in a panic and threatened everything with destruction until Mrs. Liggett, with a more dexterous flourish of the towel, sent him scooting.

Having once again got everything tended to, Mrs. Liggett turned to her visitor with an apologetic smile, and sat down with the expectation that the visit would now go on.

But Alida, who had been brought to her feet during the hubbub raised by the rooster, had decided to take her departure.

"I guess I'll be going now, Mrs. Liggett. Come over and see me sometime."

"Well, I will sometime, Mrs. Orr. But I can hardly get away from here a minute. And springtime is worst of all. And I am awful much obliged to you for thinking of us. I hardly expected anybody would give me anything like that."

"We have all got to be doing something," answered Alida. "And when you do come, be sure and bring the baby."

Alida pursued her way back down the long slope, following the old path which led past the lime-kiln and thence along the edge of the orchard.

The ancient apple trees were now in full bloom—a most pleasant sight in their delicate spring array. She paused a while to look at them. Then she left the path and made her way among them till she came to a certain old Rambo tree. Here she stood, looking up.

On a certain low limb of that Rambo tree, there had been, over twenty years ago, a robin's nest. She had stood there one day in early summer with Gilbert on her arm. He clapped his hands as she showed him the eggs; and surprised her by saying "Birdie." He was just learning to talk. Here was the old limb, the same as ever; and the very crotch in which the bird had built.

Presently she had a heavy sense of the vainness, and the incongruity, of standing there contemplating a thing that was so utterly gone. If there is anything utterly gone—

entirely swept away into the void of Time—it is a bird's nest of twenty years ago.

While she had expected to recall it with pure pleasure, it rather served to bear in upon her a poignant sense of how far this present moment was from the past—from the moment when she stood there in happy motherhood with Gilbert on her arm. That was but a summer day; and the world had moved on. So thinking she again followed the path down to the little foot-bridge over the run; and thence up the slope to the house again.

CHAPTER IX

The war had brought many changes, not the least of which, according to Cousin John's view of the world, was the triumph of Prohibition. As the direct result of this turn of affairs, we find him, on this same afternoon in the spring of 1919, industriously working in the cemetery. As he pursued his important task he engaged in a few moral reflections, his voice and manner taking on that reverential solemnity which might be expected of a Presbyterian soliloquizing in a graveyard. And in lack of anyone to be benefited by his remarks, he addressed them now to the old cart-horse, who was hauling the dirt, and now to his father's headstone. Possibly, after all, he was talking to the elder John.

The day's work, outwardly a mere matter of pick and shovel, had conspired in a number of ways to make itself pure stuff of the conscience. He had that afternoon filled up the roadside well in front of his father's house, which well, in view of the purposes for which it was intended, had become a monument of the neighborhood only second in importance to this very headstone "Sacred to the memory of John Watson." And the remaining dirt, resulting from a job of grading, he was using, at the request of the directors, to fill up a little hollow in the cemetery which, as far back as he could remember, had been used by the children as a skating pond.

As if this were not enough melancholy business for one day, he had spent the morning attending the homecoming of the soldiers—an impressive festivity to which the old mare, equally at home in the family carriage and the dump-cart, had taken him.

The homecoming of the soldiers had not touched him particularly except as he participated in the emotions of the community, and, more especially, in the feelings of Alida. It had made her feel "awful bad"; and the nature of her feelings, so different from those of other mothers, none could enter into quite so fully as he.

"She is thinking of little Gilbert," he had said to himself, noting the change in her countenance in the midst of the marching and the music. "Or maybe of big Gilbert. Yes, he would be a big boy now."

After he had done his part in welcoming the soldiers, he went home to dinner; and then resumed his work of filling up the well.

This work, contemplated for a long time, had never been done because he could not bring his conscience into a state of consent. If it had been an ordinary well dug by an ordinary man, there would have been no sacrilege in doing away with it. But it was none such. And there was a moral question involved.

This roadside well, whose wooden windlass and rising bucket had served man and beast for over fifty years, was a temperance well. It was Watson's Well; and it had been put there in front of the house simply to tempt the public to drink water. For the elder John viewed with a heavy heart mankind's propensity for liquor; and so, when he was yet a man of small means, he had taken this way of leaving the world better than he found it. He dug it with his own hands, walled it up with limestone, equipped its upper structure with windlass, bucket and iron dipper, and then watched people drink with the feeling that every dipperful drunk was so much good done in the world.

People smiled, but the well prospered. Fortunately the Lord had given him an exceptionally good quality of water such as comes from the living rock in a limestone country. It was so much more than *mere* water that it tempted people

Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
Traveller, o'er yon mountain height,
See that glory-beaming star.
Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of joy or hope foretell?
Traveller yes; it brings the day,
Promised day of Israel.

It was not very good whistling—rather like a pipe organ which lacked everything but the bellows—but as he accompanied the blowing with fine imaginary music, and always "thought" the words, it served quite well.

In this mellow mood he began to indulge in a strain of recollection, first of the well and then of the skating pond. In the unoccupied intervals when he was riding back and forth on the cart, many little things occurred to him. He thought of the time when Alida (long before she even thought of getting married and having a son to send to war) dropped her school-books into the well. She had laid them on the edge of its curb in order to operate the bucket and windlass; and by some mischance the books slid off and went down—down—farther than she could see or imagine. Arithmetic, reader, new geography and everything were gone. This, so far as he could remember, was the first notable thing that happened to the well. And from thinking of this he went on to other events in its history, and in the lives of people whom it brought to mind.

Alida, as he was now reminded, had been a good skater. He could see her as plainly as if it were yesterday with her Dutch rocker skates which had the leather heel-pieces trimmed in brass. Lottie White had been a good skater, too; and so had Ella Norris, whose tombstone he could see from where he stood. The whole troop of them were back again, flitting to and fro on the little pond.

This vein of reminiscence, beginning in a mellow mood and yielding up a sort of poetic pleasure, deepened into such sober thought that he forgot to blow away at the hymn.

And then he indulged in a new period of reflection regarding the happenings of the day.

The well, now that it was a thing of the past, was speaking to his conscience in deeper terms. Its circular mound, heaped up like a grave to allow for the settling, attracted his attention each time he passed it with a new load of dirt. The cartloads of filling, plunging down into it, and bringing a hollow roar from its depths, impressed him as a mighty voice raised up against his deed. And now it kept resounding in his mind. If only he had had his father's consent! If he could have argued it out and presented the whole logic of the thing to him, telling him the glad tidings of a liquorless world! As it was, he had to take the dead man's approval for granted. And having done so, the roar of the well continued to raise a protest in his mind and accuse him of a great sacrilege.

It was at this *impasse* in his feelings, and just when he had climbed to the seat of the cart and arranged the brown sheep pelt with the intention of getting another load to fill up the pond, that he was taken with the notion of paying a visit to Alida.

As he turned his head and looked across the road in the direction of her house, he saw her working in the front yard. She had a small trowel in hand and a gardening bonnet on her head. Evidently she was interested in getting the flowers started for summer.

To a casual passer-by, such occupation upon the part of a woman would be a sufficient note of good cheer. But to Cousin John, who knew her every move, it was plain that she was just making occupation for herself. A certain solemnity of manner told him well enough what she was thinking about.

"Lidy is feeling very sad th' day. Very sad," he mused. "It gave her a bad turn to see the boys all come marching home. I doubt she will have a hard time to forget it.

Though she never could forget it—Oh, no, no. For he would have been a big boy now. And he would have come marching home, too."

Having driven Fly up out of the hollow to the top of a little eminence, he now sat in silent contemplation of Alida, and quite forgot his own work as he watched her go from bed to bed. Over on another eminence, in plain sight, were the tombstones of all the Watsons who had "passed beyond" in the usual Watson way and been duly represented by the monument. And in the person of Alida he saw a living monument to loss of a very different sort.

"But then he might have been killed, too," he continued (his thorough-mindedness now reasserting itself). "Yes, he might that. He might have been killed in battle and be lying somewhere over there in a foreign country. But then she would have known where he was and what became of him. And she could have had him brought over here and buried with the rest of us; and she could come across the road and sit close by and visit him. And *that* would be some comfort to her. It's the not knowing. Yes, it's the not knowing."

Considering all which—together with his own predicament in regard to the well—he decided to go over and see her. There was nothing that could be done, nothing that could be said, which had not already been said or done; but in view of the unusual nature of the day's happenings he felt that all things would not be properly attended to until he had paid some attention to Alida. There might be some satisfaction in talking it all out.

And so, having decided to change the face of nature no more for that day, he took Fly by the bit and led her back to the hollow. His shovel and other belongings needed to be gathered up.

CHAPTER X

When Cousin John finally tied up at Alida's front gate—having conscientiously tarried in the hollow to smooth off the last cartload and leave it in workmanlike shape—he found that Alida had disappeared.

He paused inside the gate and took note of her gardening tools where she had laid them down. Then he saw that she had been engaged in some unusual improvements—some *very* unusual improvements. And being unusually interested, he went down one of the winding paths and stood a while looking things over.

The flower garden, which had not always been well kept up since the days when James Watson made it his pride and hobby, was all laid out in beds of fanciful design with cinder paths between. The edges of the beds, in half-moons, lozenges and circles, were marked out with white stones of uniform size—milky-white stones, almost pearl-like in their semi-transparency, such as are yielded up by the bed of the Muskingum. Certain of the larger beds were surrounded by pudding-stone or "dornicks," these consisting of the same pearl-like sort of pebbles imbedded in clusters in a cement-like stone; and punctuating all the borders at regular intervals, like gems set in a necklace, were big chunks of greenish glass that had been broken at random with the hammer.

In recent years, this work had all but disappeared from sight. The chunks of glass, from lying long in one spot and being hoed about and beaten down by the rains, had gradually been covered with soil till the greater part of them was buried. Alida had been lifting them out, scraping soil

back into the holes, and then replacing them carefully. Evidently, too, she had been washing them off. A bucket of water was standing in one of the paths.

The results of her work were very much in evidence, the full light of afternoon striking the green chunks of glass at all angles and working wonders with their giant facets. The effect was marvelous—the garden, so suddenly brought back, shone as with the light of Resurrection! This, indeed, was just what the whole operation amounted to; for the garden, a thing of buried beauty, had not stood forth in the light of day since the time when James Watson himself had made it the object of his attention.

The garden was now the very garden of the house of James. The sight of it was so convincing that Cousin John felt as if Time had leaped backward with him a score of years and left him standing amid the authentic surroundings of other days.

That garden, with a little care and attention, had all the properties of eternal youth. And it brought everything so vividly back to him that Cousin John stood looking down at a big emerald, as into a gazing globe, and thinking of matters of time and change.

Such chunks of glass, once quite plentiful, were not now to be obtained. They were a remainder of the days when the glass-makers used "those German crucibles." And the glass-blower, thrusting his long iron tube into the effulgent, white-hot "glory hole" of the furnace, gathered a molten mass from the crucible and brought it forth to make a bottle or a sheet of window glass.

But those German crucibles were not good. They got fractures in them under the intense heat; in which case the whole quantity of glass in the furnace had to be allowed to cool off and solidify. And then there was nothing to be done but to attack the big solid mass with the sledge and break it up into sizable chunks.

Uncle James had collected a great number of fine specimens for his garden. And now that the crucibles had been superseded by the more reliable tank system, such prizes were no longer to be had. Gardens like this could no longer be made. Thinking which, and greatly surprised to see the old garden coming forth like a thing of yesterday—its beauties quite untouched by the soil that had claimed them—Cousin John was much taken with the fancy of keeping it up. He told himself that he would have to prevail upon Alida to let one of the men come and help her. The work was too hard for her; and she was one who spared no pains on anything that appealed to her sense of beauty. Or—better still—he would come and lend a hand himself.

But where was she?

A door leading from the front room to the long side porch was standing ajar; and as she had evidently gone in here he pushed it open and called to her. As he received no answer, and did not find her either in the parlor or the sitting room, he went out into the kitchen to make inquiries of Aunt Caroline. But she was not there. He would have thought that she too had deserted the place were it not that certain large preparations of the kitchen table showed that Aunt Caroline was in the very midst of making a Washington cake.

Not seeing her, he stood by the kitchen door and listened; whereupon the whereabouts of Aunt Caroline made itself known. She was out in the granary, now used as a storehouse, probably getting more supplies to put into the Washington cake. She was lifting things about and singing; and as she knew but two kinds of tunes, church tunes and lullabies, she shifted from one to the other. But her fancy seemed to settle itself finally on a song that she had long ago taken from the church and turned over to the use of the cradle—

O de ole sheep done know de road;
De ole sheep done know de road;
De ole sheep done know de road;
De young lambs mus' fin' de way.

She sang this over and over, continuing her mental rocking of a purely imaginary child.

Presently, having found more supplies for the kitchen, she made her appearance in the doorway of the granary, the silver rims of her spectacles now catching the sun and gleaming against the dark background of her face. As she stood looking at John the singing suddenly shut itself off.

Aunt Caroline was very "dark complexioned." This meant that she was a dark shade of black. One of the Orrs (who were not quite such church-goers as the Watsons) once described her as being "black as the hinges of Hell." She was a slight and spare negro mammy with features so accentuatedly Ethiopian as to make her strikingly homely. But this homeliness was so absolute, and so harmonious with itself as to make her positively attractive.

"Hello, Aunt Caroline."

"How do, Marse John. Has you come to see Mis' Lidy?"

"Yes. Where is she?"

"She jes' went ramblin' away. She has gone back to see them Liggetts. You know they has a new baby."

John followed her into the kitchen and stood about while she resumed work on the Washington cake.

"Mis' Lidy has been thinkin' 'bout her boy agin," she finally offered.

"So I was thinking," he answered.

"Yes. It all come over her agin. It's them soldiers. They keep a-comin' an' a-goin' an' a-goin' an' a-comin'. Fust they come an' then they go. Ain't no tellin' where this Europe war gwine stop. An' I has been thinkin' 'bout him too."

"So I would judge from what you were singing."

"An' I say to myself, it's all my fault."

"Your fault!"

This was a new point of view to him. As she had had nothing whatever to do with the disappearance of the boy, he was curious to know what her theory might be.

"How was it your fault?"

"'Cause they didn't take me down to Texas. If they had let me go down to Texas an' be his nurse he wouldn't a-been lost. But Lawdy, I didn't want to go down to no Texas—an' besides they didn't ast me. But I knowed how to take care of Mis' Lidy's chile for three years; an' they ain't no pusson could a-got him away f'om *me*. An' then, after I brung him up, they take him down to Texas an' let him get los'. That chile jes' runs aroun' loose in Texas an' didn't have no mo' watchin' than if that *Dutch* boy had been takin' care of him agin."

The "Dutch boy," her predecessor, was still a mark of Aunt Caroline's scorn. In the absence of a competent nurse, the Dutch boy had been hired, when Alida's child was eight or nine months old, to wheel him about and give him the air; but this big, lubberly, easy-going caretaker soon developed such a faculty for inattention and consequent accidents that he was found impossible. Shortly after that the Orrs made their great discovery in Caroline; and she had been with them ever since, except for a time when she left them to engage in matrimony, a venture which did not prove fortunate. After a time she came back to her "folks," and was now a permanent *attaché* of Alida's household.

As Alida did not return immediately, and Cousin John hardly cared to follow her up, he decided to go upstairs and see what the prospects were. She might be somewhere on the back property; in which case her whereabouts could be most easily ascertained from a certain bed-room window which commanded a view of the land behind the orchard and up beyond the lime-kiln.

The door of this room was standing half open. It was

the bed-room which had always been used by James and his wife; and it still had in it a mahogany four-poster which interested Cousin John very much. Alida had had it refinished at much expense and made over so that it would take a modern mattress—a procedure which Cousin John could hardly understand in these days when a bed can be bought ready-made at even less cost. Despite its present elegance, he could not forget the stout, round timber with many pegs on which its ropes were stretched, and the old bed winch, still somewhere about the place, with which these ropes used to be made tight as a fiddle. To his mind it was still an out-of-date piece of furniture; and so, as he entered the room, his eye turned instinctively toward it.

What he saw there should not have surprised him greatly, one would think. But it did.

Spread out on top of the bed, and nearly covering its lace counterpane, was an array of infant's garments. There was a long, white dress; a little knit jacket, much beribboned; a pair of knit booties to match; strangely small underclothes. Unbelievably small!

Cousin John, taken aback to find his insights of Alida's mind corroborated to this extent, forgot to look out of the window and stood gazing upon the bed.

At one end of it, separated from the rest, were all the things that had been made before Gilbert was born. At the other end were two large dresses, one a well-remembered plaid. And in between these sizes was an unrepresented interval of three or four years. A lower bureau drawer, half open, told where they had come from.

The boy of four being thus brought before his mind's eye—the very pronounced plaid calling him up most vividly —John cast his eye about in search of its companion suit, the dress of black velvet. And then remembered suddenly why it was not there. It was the dress he had on when he disappeared. Between the contrasting sizes at the two

ends of the bed, there were no others. These things were the first of him—and the last.

Engaging his mind more than any of the others was a most diminutive garment, an undershirt. He looked at it incredulously; he wondered whether it had been *really* that small or whether it had *shrunk*. Curiously he picked it up and drew it on his broad, hairy hand. He looked it over contemplatively, front and back.

The fine soft wool, warming up his hand, was like a live touch of the past—as if he again had his hand on the baby itself. The little shirt was smaller than he would have believed! It fitted his hand like a glove! Its arm was hardly too big for his thumb. And of such as these soldiers—soldiers—are made!

This little experience called up such a confusion of old memories and present thoughts, that he stood in a sort of daze, trying to get the past and present into something like a whole. His mind started right in at the beginning—and there came back to him that important morning when the whole bevy of Watson girls, with dancing eyes, were all hovering over the bed and trying to get their fill of looking at the baby. And there were the grandparents cooing and doting in their midst!

In his revisioning of that event, many faces kept passing before him and getting into the picture—as if it were impossible for that baby to be considered *alone*. They were mostly girlish faces shining with the light of morning. And mixed in with this jumble of old memories, incongruously, there was the steady rhythm of this very day. Guns and drums and men in khaki went marching, marching through.

The little shirt being undoubtedly what it was, and of just the size that it represented itself to be, he drew it off his hand and placed it on the bed where he had found it. And then, thinking of Alida again, he went to the window and looked out.

She was just returning from her errand to the back of the property. Cousin John stepped back from the window as if he did not care to have her see him. Then he turned and went hastily down the stairs.

In the living room, formerly the "parlor," he seated himself in a big leather arm-chair, placing his hat on the floor beside him. And then (a questionable point in human deportment which we shall allow John to carry away in his own conscience and settle with himself) he proceeded to look as nearly as possible as if he had been sitting there all the while awaiting her return.

But Alida had yet a long way to come, walking slowly. And in the meantime Cousin John fell to thinking just what he was going to say to her. What had he come for? Had he come to talk about Gilbert? And thus to devise some sort of consolation or give grounds for hope?

But how hope? Everything had been said that could be said. Everything had been done that could be done. It had been looked into and talked over in a thousand ways. There was no hope. The boy was gone. He was lost.

Evidently (as he now plainly saw) he had been intending merely to indulge in reminiscence, to stir up a host of live little memories. He was going to say to her, "Do you remember when he said this?" and "Do you recall the day he did that?" And thus bring the boy back only to have her lose him over again! There was hardly any kindness in doing this. Of course she remembered all these things. The trouble was that she could not forget them.

If Gilbert had died and been duly buried, and she had become reconciled to his passing away, it would all be different. In that case she would find pleasure, and a certain consolation, in talking to one in whose mind the boy was still living. But this was different. And he was always forgetting that it was different. He had, in truth, come to talk about Gilbert as if he were dead—as if there were some basis

for such a supposition. But there was no basis for it; and to assume that there was would be simply to destroy what hope she had. On the other hand he could offer no new hope, for there was no basis for that. And so, after all, there was nothing to be said.

Hope without basis is simply despair. She had a sort of substitute for it—belief—faith—"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And the less that is tampered with by mere man the better. Hope without an argument behind it is a thing that grows worse the more you look into it. It is a bending reed. The boy was gone. And now, after twenty years, there was hardly a chance that he would ever be brought back to her. That was the truth, though he had no Scripture for it; and he would not want to say anything to her that was not the truth.

When Cousin John, much perplexed, had argued things out to this very logical conclusion, he heard Alida at the kitchen door. Immediately—with remarkable promptitude for a man who usually had to arrive at things logically—he picked up his hat and got out.

He walked along the length of the porch very quietly, stepping breathlessly on each uncertain board; and thus down off the wooden steps to the grass. Then he untied Fly, and went down the road on the dump-cart.

As he passed the circular mound where the well had been, the voice of the thing again went rumbling through his memory—a roar out of the depths of it as if he had been dumping his cartloads of dirt on some outraged genius of the past and violating a thousand tender memories. And he told himself that if the past could really be buried in any such way as that, he would be willing to shovel and haul any number of loads of dirt.

But the past cannot be buried. Something is always happening to resurrect it. Alida's boy was dead, or as good as dead. But he was far from buried.

CHAPTER XI

On the following morning John was sorry that he had filled up the well. What if Prohibition did not go through? What if, despite its present promise, the Amendment failed to pass? There is many a slip between the cup and the lip; and this applies to water as well as wine.

The outcome had seemed quite certain to him, especially as liquor was still under the wartime ban; but the hosts of the evil one are ever busy and full of guile. Whence it behooves those who are soldiers of the Cause to be steadfast and single-minded, and never to be caught napping. His father would not have filled up the well—not till he had seen the last state ratify. It was not the Watson way. And so John told himself that, despite all reasons to the contrary, he should not thus have given in. From which we may conclude that Cousin John, like his father, was somewhat of a Conservative.

Of course (as he several times reflected) all this conscientious pother about a few cartloads of dirt would be quite out of place were it a mere matter of filling up a hole in the ground; or if this were nothing more than a *well*. But it was not an ordinary well. It was an institution, a part of the very country, steeped in tradition and hallowed by a hundred tales; it was the roadside representative of a Cause. More than this, it was his father's one great means of *expression*. That and the famous passage from his evening prayers—"O Lord, *now* will you hear me"—had come to stand for him in the public mind, summing up, as it did, the man's character and the whole tenor of his life. So that, after he had died, the well was not only a record but a monument. And to raze a monument or destroy the

record of a life is a thing that should be done only upon ripe consideration.

The elder John, like his brother James, had had no great gift of tongue. They were workers rather than talkers, doing things after the manner of the building of the well, which was not heralded beforehand nor dedicated when done, nor even so much as mentioned as a thing with a mission in the world except as the fact came out in John's prayers or in casual conversation. It had simply been put there to do its work. And as the Watsons believed in salvation by faith as well as by works, and were by nature quite as practical as they were sentimental, John Watson always included the subject of liquor in his evening prayers. It was usually in this connection (he had a strong voice) that he would bring out that phrase known to the whole countryside, "O Lord, *now* will you hear me?"

In keeping with this reticence of tongue, except when he was arguing with the Lord, John was not an exhorter. But the well, once its significance had leaked out, and the story had traveled from one neighborhood to another, began to speak for itself. It became a more potent advocate of temperance than if it had been accompanied with any number of tracts or verbal exhortations. One could scarcely drink there without meditating all the while upon the one important subject. The veriest old toper, taking a drink of cold water and knowing all the while what the well stood for, would have to give a few moments' thought to the subject of liquor and the error of his ways. Its water had a meaning.

Because of the idealistic purpose for which it existed, as well as its great usefulness to the public and the natural gratitude with which a thirsty man drinks water, the institution grew in fame and became known as Watson's Well. It was not as other wells. It was quite different from a well built at public expense or a pump that stands before a public

house and fills a trough to tempt the teamster in. It was a wayside evangelist, pure and simple, offering freely what it had to give and attesting one man's faith in the power of good over evil. And John Watson, as yet a poor man, was as proud of the work of his hands as any great public benefactor could be over the institution that had been founded with his money.

As the well became established in its character and grew to be the subject of anecdote and neighborhood tradition, it was frequently mentioned with a smile—as if he were somewhat of a character. But hardly with the smile of levity or condescension. There was, indeed, very little about such a man that could be made light of. On the one hand, there was the well; and on the other hand there was that oft-repeated phrase from his evening prayers. Aside from this outcropping of his deeper nature, he was a mere limestone-blasting, dirt-digging, wonderfully enduring and everyday sort of Christian. He hauled coal and lime and sand and pottery clay and lifted the biggest and heaviest stones out of the quarry into the cart.

His way of praying, however, struck the public as a novelty and engaged its attention. Betokening, as it did, a peculiar intimacy between John Watson and the Lord, it became known near and far; and there was hardly a wit with any pretension to powers of mimicry who could not bring out, in all its earnestness and force and argumentative emphasis, that passage from his prayers—"O Lord, *now* will you hear me."

There was something about this phrase, whatever the deeper reasons might be, which seemed to do the public good. John Watson was a man who not only addressed the Lord in prayer but talked things over with him. He laid down his case, insisted upon being heard, and awaited an answer. It was easy to be seen that John Watson, once he had started anything, was going to see it through. It was

a prayer that was argumentative and determined; but yet it was not lacking in humility. Its implication that John Watson had asked this thing many times before, and had not received attention,—possibly because of his too little faith or other unworthiness—betrayed a belief in a personal and living God that was as simple as it was profound. But however humble it might be at bottom, his statement of his wants always got around to that insistent phrase which called for the triumph of Temperance among men; and in this the whole Watson nature seemed to be summed up—persevering, hard working, and not to be put aside.

All this was purely a matter of the closet. John did not pray from the housetop. But as he had a strong voice, especially when he was telephoning or talking to the Almighty, he might as well have done so. In this way the secrets of his sanctuary and his whole set of private relations with the Lord had long become a matter of public property; so that a wayfarer, passing the house at that time of evening when John was down beside the bedside chair, would not have to wait long by the well until he was rewarded by hearing that interesting exhortation. And it was well known that certain hard drinkers, deaf to all personal appeal, had been turned from the error of their ways by thus overhearing John Watson putting in a private word for them to the Lord.

Here was one reason that, from being at first smiled at, he finally came to be so universally respected. He was not one to go at the sinner direct, carrying his own self-righteousness into the matter. Even if he happened to be before his door when a likely prospect was drinking the water, he was not one to rush forward and take a hand. He added nothing to the still, small voice of the well. He no doubt felt that, having done the digging, it only remained for him to have faith and the Lord would do the rest. He planted and watered and the Lord gave the increase.

But he watched all drinkers with interest, and when the drink was over, his cordial smile, coming out like sunshine on his ample and rugged features, showed plainly enough how he felt about it.

Without doubt, this was the secret of his power, and also his popularity. It was because he did not reprimand an erring world (though its weaknesses must have been evident to him) that the public, even while it made a good story of him, came to regard him with much respect mingled with a certain fondness. Even the topers, who were his occasional patrons, did not regard him as "an enemy of the traffic." He was not indeed, an "enemy" of anything. And while his mind was so strictly logical, always threshing things out in the high court of reason, his arguments were usually addressed to the Lord, and inwardly to his own mind and conscience.

Cousin John, pondering yesterday's work with the fresh mind of early morning, thought of all these things, one after another. Consequently, when he threw the wooden cart-saddle on Fly and went up the road to put some finishing touches on his work in the hollow, his mind was loaded with a hundred reminiscences of the elder John, all of them making allusion to that well and asking him whether he had acted the part of wisdom in filling it up. What if Prohibition, after all, did not come in? What ought he to do about it?

When he had arrived at the edge of the skating pond his thoughts rambled off toward the eminence which constituted the family lot. And presently, without getting down from the cart, he turned Fly's head in that direction.

Just why he did this he had no theory with himself. Being inclined to a short spell of meditation, he naturally gravitated toward surroundings that were in harmony with his mood—besides which was a very practical desire to see how things were coming up after the winter. But as he had

his father's grave more particularly in mind, we may be allowed to suspect that, having the whole question of the well to go over *pro* and *con,* and being about to justify his conscience for all time, he would feel more satisfied with having done it in the presence of the one concerned. And more especially in view of the fact that he knew exactly what sort of logic his father would assent to if a case were candidly laid before him. The elder John, while he believed in justification by faith, was none the less logical in his modes of assent. And the son, being at one with him in this regard, was quite as well equipped to come to an understanding with the dead John as with a live one.

When he had looked the lots over, paying equal attention to that of his uncle James, Alida's father, he came to a pause by the grave of the elder John and spent a while in solemn thought. Then as if he were addressing his remark partly to Fly and partly to his father's headstone, he nodded his head slowly and said: "Yes, I will do that."

Having thus come to some sort of understanding with all concerned, he checked Fly's head up (she had been philosophically eating the grass on her former master's grave) and turned with the intention of going back. And then, looking across the road, and seeing Alida again working in the garden, his mind suddenly reverted to the events of yesterday.

He had called for her in the morning thinking she might care to ride into town with him behind old Fly; but she had already accepted the invitation of a neighbor who had room for her in the car. As for John, he preferred to attend the soldiers' homecoming behind old Fly. She had been his father's horse, a Morgan mare with an all-round education and "a great horse in a pinch." It was the elder John who had given her the aforesaid education; first as a plow horse that would respond to Gee and Haw; second as a carriage horse who could change her gait in keeping with the Rock-

away buggy with the brass hubs; and lastly as the able engineer of a dump-cart in which for so many years she had hauled all the varied products of mine and pit and quarry in Southeastern Ohio. As she had been the elder John's inseparable companion, she stood somewhat in the relation of a survivor to him, still able-bodied and well-kept after twenty-six years of work. And withal, full of the whims and settled notions of a horse that has known but one master —a truly Watson horse, showing in her old age the advantages of a life of steady habits. As John regarded the soldiers' homecoming as a rather solemn affair, in view of all the dead who were not coming back, it seemed more respectable to him to go in behind a horse. Fly he regarded as being more respectable than any auto, as well as more reliable. Although (a thing his father would hardly believe) he had seen a hearse propelled by gasoline!

After he had watched Alida depart in the auto, he did not see her again except for a few moments when he caught sight of her in the throng. Once he got a glimpse of her at the depot and saw her eyes a-swim; and again from his station near the court-house, where, in the midst of the cheers and the rhythm of young legs a-swing to the music of the band, he saw her handkerchief go to her eyes.

Others, he told himself, would probably think she was being moved by the same fulfilling emotions as *they* were. They could hardly be expected to understand. In a world which buries its dead, and where the common lot of bereavement is of such a nature that time can heal and sanctify it, a grief which is not of recent date is not easily accounted for.

Among the women at the depot whose history he was familiar with, he had noted a variety of tears—of joy, of sentiment and of sacrifice; which latter, he reflected, were not without recompense. And when he caught sight of Alida and saw her giving way to a sort of dumb grief, his very logical mind could not help making distinctions and

telling him that *her* tears were different. It was poignant reassertion of an old grief for which there seemed to have been no assuagement. This spectacle of young men marching past was tearing away at the roots of the irremediable past.

It was after this experience that he went home with Fly, and, thinking to lose himself in work, made such a summary job of filling up the well. And, having got himself into such difficulties there, made a complete failure of his errand of consolation.

As he regarded Alida as being comparatively young, looking down upon her forty-six years from the altitude of his own sixty-two with distinct memories of the day when he was sixteen and she was only one, none stood quite so naturally in the relation of comforter and adviser to her, especially as he lived so "handy by." And so, as he again turned to watch her from his station on the family lot, and again took note, as she went here and there amid the flowers, that there was a distinct lack of that live and youthful air which was so characteristic of her—she had always been the sprightliest and most charming of the girls and the most sought after—his mind blamed the whole state of affairs upon conditions here among the tombstones.

After all, that was the real cause of it. There was one of them who was *not* here. He was not buried here with the rest of them—that is, supposing he were dead. And yet he was nowhere in the land of the living so far as they were concerned—if, indeed, he were still alive! To all intents and purposes he was dead and not buried. A strange case for a Watson to be in!

Yes, indeed, a strange case for a Watson to be in. And a strange grief which could thus resurrect itself, after a score of years, as if it had never been settled. Things were not done so here on the place of the lighted lantern.

He began to think now of the one who was *not* here—possibly the grown soldier who should have gone marching

by. And immediately that person came and stood before his eyes the same as ever—a little boy in a black velvet suit with golden buttons down the front. In over twenty years he had not grown up. For, being but a thing of memory, how could he? Only yesterday his contemporaries in khaki had gone marching up Main street to the music of the band; but despite these witnesses to his manhood—providing he were still living—he remained a mere infant. It was only by the exercise of reason that they could ever think of him as a man; and then they had no knowledge of what he was like! He did not come and stand before them; and so, Memory, having known him in a hundred ways, stepped forth and held up his picture. And pictures do not grow.

With this strange thought in mind, and the feeling that he had, at least, come to a very satisfactory arrangement with his father, he went back to the little skating pond and threw himself into the spirit of the work, grading off what he had dumped and preparing the way for other loads.

Having things once more in shape, he climbed up on the brown sheepskin and headed Fly out for another load, being careful, as he passed Alida's place, to hum and whistle as well as he could, by way of conveying the idea that it was a world to be happy in.

But when he had passed the garden, and was again out in the broad highway of life, the whistling stopped and his face took on a more businesslike look.

"Yes, I will do that," he repeated. "If they vote us down I will put in a drilled well. I will wait and see. And if Pro-high-bition does not come in I will drive to town the next day and order pipe. And I will drive a well so deep down into the ground that the water from the gutter never *will* get into it. That I will."

From which we may safely conclude that a Watson, once he set his mind on anything, could not easily be expected to give up.

BOOK THE THIRD

BOOK THE THIRD

CHAPTER I

David Mann, newly attired in a light spring suit, came strolling down West Adams street, Chicago, with the air of a young man very much at leisure. It was his Saturday afternoon off; and having found, upon quitting work, that the sun was lending countenance to spring apparel, he scrubbed himself with extra vigor and came forth in the new regalia. An aristocratic sense of cleanliness, imparted by the feel of the fresh, new cloth, together with the smoothness of his skin, still glowing under the attack he had made upon it with soap and brush, seemed to lift him entirely out of the world of work and set him down that Saturday afternoon as fresh and spotless as man new made.

As he had nothing more to do than to fare forth in the new suit, his present intention was to turn at the next corner and thence proceed onward to the sights and scenes of West Madison street.

But just as he neared the corner his attention was engaged by the sight of a woman—an "old lady" he would have called her—sitting in a rocking chair close to the curbing. All about her were her household belongings, a small display of furniture, bedding and cooking utensils which, as they offered too much obstruction to the sidewalk and could not very well be set in the street, had been crowded and piled on curbstone and gutter so that they occupied a sort of no-man's-land between the two lines of traffic.

In the midst of this disarray was an old and very feminine type of high-backed mahogany rocker; and in this the old

lady was sitting, very quietly, as if she were still clinging to the idea of home. In her hand was a small handkerchief, tightly wadded and barely visible. It was evident that she had moved hastily or that she was a very careless packer. Many little articles that might have been modestly concealed, stood out beneath the sun and took the full glare of publicity.

There is something about such an inner view of life which intrigues the mind of the idler. A home, dragged out into the light of day and garishly exposed to the world in all its intimate details, is a pitiless opening of the book of life. David Mann, having nothing much to do, and being open to any trifle of entertainment which the world might afford him on that Saturday afternoon, took a passing view of the woman and her property. Then he came back and stood a while, frankly viewing the situation.

The woman, who must have been aware that she was being gazed at, did not seem to be affected either favorably or unfavorably by his presence. When, finally, her eyes turned in his direction, the two regarded each other in a wholly impersonal way—abstractly, remotely, as from the distance of different worlds. And after this wholly void and meaningless encounter of eyes, the woman resumed her helpless contemplation of her own chaotic world, leaving him, if he chose, to keep on staring at the secrets of the bed-room, the kitchen and the old-fashioned parlor.

David had at first thought that the woman was moving. And that, possibly, she was waiting for the expressman to arrive. But a second look told him that he had not read the story aright. She was not waiting for any expressman to arrive. She had been weeping. There was that in her lost look, and in the way she grasped the handkerchief in her small, plump hand, which told him that she probably had been put out. She did not seem to be expecting anything whatever.

"Put out?" he queried.

"Yes," she said.

"Too bad," he offered.

In the little while that she looked directly at him, David gained a distinct impression of her eyes. They were a soft and misty blue—very mild and docile in their look. And they seemed ready, at any moment, to melt into tears again. She was, or at least *should* have been, somebody's mother. This thought jumped, all of its own accord, into his mind, and seemed to stand as a complete definition of her.

She was a plump little woman with white skin and rosy cheeks which denoted a northern origin; but in the few words she spoke to him there was no accent to tell him which of the northern races she might have come from. Principally, however, she was a woman entirely surrounded by a home; and as helpless outside of it as a fish out of water. David, noting her fairness and rosy-roundness, was reminded of a little bisque statue of a housewife attractively colored in red, white and blue.

The woman, encouraged by his continued interest in her affairs, now gave him closer scrutiny, noting especially the well-fitting spring suit and the straightness of his form. But her interest in these things was soon put out of mind by a blemish on his face. This now held her whole attention.

Over the young man's eye, and continuing in a sharper line on his cheekbone, was a scar, the remainder of what must have been, at the upper end at least, a fearful gash. At this upper end, where it bisected his eyebrow, it seemed to have been so heavy that it depressed the bone a little, threatening to ruin the whole canopy of the eye. But this effect of depression, now that the tissues had filled out with a scar, might have been largely due to the scant place in his eyebrow, the hair having ceased to grow in the path of the wound.

From the overhang of the brow the wound jumped his eye (which it would seem to have barely grazed) and left a decided, clean-cut mark on his cheek which grew finer and

finer till it disappeared. It had the effect of an exclamation mark across his eye. Or a quick and careless stroke of cancellation!

The scar, presenting such a contrast with his youthful countenance, his light spring suit and his generally perfect appearance, stood out strangely; and the little woman found herself regretting that it was there. It did not seem to belong on such a nice young man. If he were her son, she would be very sorry. One naturally expected him to be without a flaw. But here was this scar, looking you straight in the face and contradicting you—as if tragedy had already set its seal upon his brow. She became so taken up with thinking how narrowly his eye had escaped destruction that she could think of nothing else.

Meantime the two said nothing. And David, being used to having the scar looked at, kept on with his inventory of her property.

Prominent among her belongings, and rather dominating the scene, was a big blue sea-chest. It was heavy looking and capacious; and as it was one of the kind which has sloping sides with its bottom bigger than its top (being designed to sit solid in a storm), it now seemed to have firmly established itself on the sidewalk. Its handles, of skilfully plaited rope with wonderfully woven balls at the ends, were painted white in contrast with the blue of the chest. On top of it, along with some china bric-a-brac of quaint design, were four large, leather-covered volumes entitled History of the World.

A maltese cat, hidden somewhere amid the things, came forth and began stroking itself against her. The cat, purring and turning and weaving back and forth, gave her a strangely domestic air as she sat there in the street. She was hardly suited to such reverses in life. And she was, or at least she *should* have been (as he again told himself) somebody's mother!

With this thought it occurred to him that he ought not to be standing there making her an object of curiosity. He therefore moved on a short distance and stood with his back against a brick wall, from which station he began to watch developments.

An occasional pedestrian, intent upon his own affairs, hurried past and paid little attention to the display of household goods awaiting at the curb. It was a time of year when such things seemed natural. Pretty soon everybody would be moving. And so this early sign of spring, along with the newly arrived robin that had just begun to picket a stretch of grass along the curb, was hardly of interest amid the important clockwork of business engagements and the scheduled pleasures of the city. Now and then a pedestrian paused a moment, as if he had caught some understanding of the case—and then hurried on again with his goal straight before him.

Presently, however, an individual who had more time on his hands came along that way. He was unkempt and shabby and entirely disreputable. His suit, worn threadbare, had taken on that smooth outer coating by which threadbare suits protect themselves from further wear and start to be everlasting. The fronts of his thighs, especially, had taken on a shine like a stovepipe—though whether from sloth or industry it would be hard to say, inasmuch as sloth often gives a man the higher polish. He might have been a tramp or he might have been a workman—more likely that modern combination of the two, the seasonal worker. But whatever his classification he was a man of leisure in his way, and he came on with the loosely free and independent air of those who, having nothing, are citizens at large.

That he had a professional conception of himself as a rightful human being might be inferred from the way he wore his hat. It sat on his head with a certain careless but cocked aspect which seemed to say that, though it might be

shabby and shapeless and much sat on, it was still unsquelched. In keeping with this character he had an alert and roving eye which took in everything; and when he came to the woman and the pile of furniture he stopped. And then, with the informal free-masonry of his kind he engaged her directly in conversation.

The woman did not seem to resent this intrusion upon her household affairs. She replied to his questions innocently and directly, her china blue eyes seeming to make no question that, as her fortune was now pitched in public places, the public would naturally have something to say in the matter. The man's grime-polished appearance seemed to be nothing against him in her estimation; but it became apparent, as she talked, that all such minor details were lost in her consciousness that he was that all-important creature, a *man*. In answering his questions she looked at him in an inquiring and almost hopeful way, as if he, being a man, might know what to do. And finally, to explain just what had happened to her, she showed him the notice which had preceded her eviction.

The man took it and proceeded to exercise his powers of reading aloud, pronouncing the legal terms with a formal air that was quite innocent of punctuation, and finally ran up against a snag in what was evidently her name—*Sonder-berg*.

Yes, he remarked as he handed her back the paper, he was familiar with such doings. They did that to everybody. And everybody had to stand for it. At which point, having come to the end of all he could say regarding her case, he began with a new voice, and perfunctory, hammerlike gestures, to hold forth upon landlords and the rich in general.

From the matter-of-fact ease with which this acquaintance had been struck up, and the timeliness with which the man had happened along to make the woman feel at home on the sidewalk, one might have supposed that he was the walking

delegate of destitution—some appointed and official emissary of misfortune going about the city to welcome newcomers into the ranks of poverty. One never falls so low in the world but that he finds another world waiting to receive him.

The woman seemed to find some comfort in this man's knowledge of a world in which "everybody" was treated so. And his deeper, new-found voice, together with his big-fisted gestures—which, for lack of something to hammer on, set him at a loss until he solved the difficulty by pounding into his fist—certainly helped her case a little.

All this David took in with much interest. Evidently the woman knew little but the virtues of cleanliness and the duties of kitchen and parlor. And just when she was picked up bodily and set down in the streets of Chicago, a pink-and-white representative of the world-old order of things, there came along a man as authentically dirty as if he had just emerged from the coal-mine or locomotive pit, and began to say things for her in a *loud voice*. To the little woman it must have sounded like a promise—the promise that a man's presence naturally gives to a woman of this kind. Or at least like the echo of a promise harking back to generations of Sonderbergs and raising up within her some reminiscence of the voice of the Viking.

But her present Viking, when he had got through repeating his set phrases, showed no promise of doing anything. It was evident to David that he was coming to the end of his words; which he very soon did. And having declared that "They'll get what's coming to them yet," he moved on and receded into the distance, leaving things just as they were before.

When her visitor was gone she took another look at her surroundings and then lapsed into her former state of baffilement, sitting quiet and almost motionless in the rocking chair which she did not rock.

David, hardly stopping to ask why this affair should be any concern of his, now abandoned his semi-distant station and put himself in evidence again. And feeling that the wall was now down between them—such walls of air being not the least impenetrable of the walls of which a city is composed—he took up matters where the other inquisitor had left off.

At first she was a little reticent and barely answered his questions. Possibly a well-dressed young man did not seem very promising to one whose case called for age and understanding. But when she had caught something in the spirit of his questioning, she became quite communicative. Her husband had died two years before. There had been a little pension, but that had ceased to come. She had kept on trying to make ends meet; but she had gradually fallen behind. Then, finally, they sent her this piece of paper, and the men came and set her out. She "didn't have the money."

"But haven't you a son—or a married daughter?" asked David, still possessed of the idea that she *must* be somebody's mother.

She shook her head.

Then, with something of a new look in her eye she surveyed her young man from head to foot.

"No, I have no son," she added.

CHAPTER II

During the time that David had been standing with his back to the brick wall his mind had been employed in turning over an idea which had suddenly presented itself. Why not take her over to Burns's place?

Over Burns's shop were two rooms which Burns hardly had use for. They were just so much empty space. Burns usually worked Saturday afternoons; consequently, if he were to take the old lady over there now, Burns would be there to look her over and give his consent.

It was a mere idea; one of those things which might easily be done. But as he stood there studying her, and imagined her sitting contentedly in one of those little dormer windows, the idea became a picture. And he had been working on it and filling it out. The whole arrangement seemed so natural and so pleasing that it soon became one of those things which a person really *ought* to do.

Upon making the suggestion to her, he found that she was quite willing to follow advice. And so, having obtained her acceptance, which was less a matter of words than of a new and almost worshipful attitude toward him, David set out to do it. Presently he returned with an expressman, and very soon the furniture, with David's assistance on the larger pieces, was ready to move along.

Then came an argument as to who should sit on the seat, a consideration made necessary by the unfortunate width of the expressman. Mrs. Sonderberg insisted that Mr. Mann sit on the seat. She could sit behind, on a corner of the sea-chest, and hold the cat. But he was of the opinion that she should sit on the seat and hold the cat while he rode on

the sea-chest. But Mrs. Sonderberg was hardly satisfied to have him sitting back there "in his good clothes"; she would much rather see him in his good clothes sitting up in front—at which point the whole matter was settled by the expressman's announcement that they were *both* going to sit on the seat because *he* was one of the kind that knew how to stand up and drive. And so, with the two passengers on the seat, and the expressman standing close behind with his feet firmly planted in the furniture, Mrs. Sonderberg's erstwhile outlawed effects moved off in the direction of Burns's place.

The little woman, knowing little of her destination, and still less of the young man beside her except for the high opinion she formed of him, said nothing. But continually her eye was turning in his direction and looking him over approvingly; he was so clean-cut and strong and self-reliant, and (not the least of her points of approval) so well fitted in his new spring suit.

The suit, a salt-and-pepper creation, was not quite to David's liking. He could have wished that it had not been fitted in the back. In looking forward to the day when he would be in civilians again, he had got his mind rather firmly set on a sack coat—something loose and easy-fitting and falling in with his new sense of freedom and unconstraint. But the tailor had disapproved. The fitted back would be worn. It had come in during the war for young men of his age; and he, especially, would look well in it. Whereupon David, not caring to be out of fashion, accepted the dictum of the tailor and ceased protesting.

But to Mrs. Sonderberg's mind, the light gray suit with the fitted back was perfection. It was just the thing to set off the supple strength of his shoulders and the straightness of his form; and he was built so much like a soldier that the suit could not do better than follow his body closely. For it was, after all, not so much the suit that Mrs. Sonderberg was admiring as it was the young man inside of it—*her*

young man. And the whole reason that the suit looked well in back and shoulder and chest and limb was that the young man filled it out in just that way. And as he was, in some sense, *her* young man for the time being, she continued to look him over with pride. And not only to look him over, but also (with a consciousness of her own small strength and waning powers) to enjoy the atmosphere of youthful health and vigor which seemed to emanate from him. How easily he had handled his end of that sea-chest! What a wonderful *son* he would be! How unconscious he was of his abounding strength and vigor and all the busy forces of life that went on within him! But almost palpable to her, as, with her little feminine need of strength, she sat within the circle of its influence.

There is, without doubt, a self-atmosphere of youth; an aura of forces which follows it about and belongs to it; and which, to one upon whom age has begun to close down, is as perceptible as the atmosphere of a bee-hive. With such secret thoughts, Mrs. Sonderberg regaled her eye upon that salt-and-pepper suit and drew deeply upon that inner well of power, which, under other circumstances, might have been hers to enjoy to the end of her days. If only she had such a son!

Not for long, however, could she keep her mind away from that scar. It bothered her greatly. Finally she spoke.

"You have a very bad scar on your eye."

"Yes," he said.

Evidently this was all he intended to say. And then, as if he felt that this answer was rather short, he added, brushing his hand across the place—"Yes, it was quite a scar."

"Were you in an accident?"

"A piece of iron hit it," he replied.

Mrs. Sonderberg leaned forward and took closer scrutiny of the scar, placing her hand to her brow as if to shield her from so vivid a contemplation of what might have happened.

"It was—so *close,*" she said.

"It pretty near put my lamp out."

"Your eye?"

"Both of them," he answered, now turning his head farther about.

This other scar was hardly so noticeable as the one at which she had been looking. But it was a sufficient scar for such a place, and sufficiently close. It was on the very edge of the cheekbone.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Mrs. Sonderberg, at once resuming her upright position and ceasing to look. At the same time she placed her hand on his forearm and pressed it warmly. And she continued to keep it there, as if she were loath to let go.

Mrs. Sonderberg could not pursue her inquiries further because her young man was now engaged in giving instructions to the driver. In doing so he had to use his right arm to point out the way; but he was careful not to make any demand upon the arm which the woman was claiming for her own. And presently the express wagon, in accordance with his instructions, turned into a paved alley.

"Up there is the place," he said, pointing to the upper part of a little story-and-a-half brick building. "When you want to sew you can sit in one of those French windows."

On the way over, David's pictorial imagination had been at work; and these little dormer windows, projecting slightly from a Mansard roof of figured slate, seemed a natural frame for a contented old lady engaged upon her sewing. She would, he fancied, put up little lace curtains and sit there on sunny afternoons. When he first started out, any such ideal view of affairs was totally absent from his mind. He had in view merely two empty rooms which might as well be made use of. But there was something about her and her household which suggested it; and as he went along

the whole arrangement threw itself into a pleasant picture. By the time they turned into the alley, the little dormer window seemed to be awaiting her arrival. Although, in its present cobwebby and far from shiny state, it would take much soap and water to make the picture what he fancied.

The little building, a square and solid brick structure, had formerly been a private stable. Latterly it had become a scene of manufacturing industry, the lower part being just big enough to accommodate Jim Burns's acetylene welding shop, while the upper part had three small rooms, one of which was occasionally used by a young man who made musical instruments. The two remaining rooms would accommodate Mrs. Sonderberg very nicely.

Although the place had been a stable and was now a workshop, it persisted, by virtue of its style of architecture, in looking like a home. This was due to the fact that it had formerly belonged to a very respectable residence with whose general style of French architecture it had been built to conform. This aristocratic distinction of the stable had become the more marked since its larger companion had ceased to compete with it, the residence having been torn apart and remodeled on a more commercial basis. Thus the little stable was left to go into French architecture entirely on its own account; and so, in spite of the fact that it looked upon the alley and housed grimy industry in its lower part, and notwithstanding its dormer windows were cobwebby and unkept, it still maintained that it was a little home of artistic lineage. It was, in fact, a sort of alley *château;* and it was probably this, together with David's French memories and the striking appropriateness of the little woman, that had set his pictorial imagination to work.

Jim Burns and his helpers were a little surprised to see a sewing basket and part of a bedstead come moving into their shop. As there were no outside stairs, everything had

to come by the shop entrance; and the driver, taking it for granted that this was where the things were going, got off with a large consignment under each arm.

Even though an acetylene welder might have the strongest sort of liking for ladies, the spectacle of a tenant moving in under such circumstances would naturally be enough to cause hospitality to retire within and slam the door of the mind. But surprise, in this instance, prevented the mind from working. And when it was found that the household consisted of one little woman and a cat, and the men observed (during the time she was being introduced and explained) just what sort of person she was, their minds opened up and took her in. Jim said he had no objection to her using the rooms, at least for a while. And as she was going to cast her lot among them, they might as well lend a hand with the furniture. Whereupon they all knocked off work to help; and Mrs. Sonderberg's things, kitchen, bed-room and parlor and sea-chest, went upstairs in a space of time that was astounding.

Her very first comment upon her new quarters was one which, when they had gathered its import from constant repetition, served to fix their relations to one another and establish her among them upon a very simple basis. It was that she was thankful to have found such a "safe" place to live.

At first, the exact meaning of this was not caught; but it came out very plainly when she produced a cheap chain bolt from a corner of the sea-chest and showed them a link that had been bent and partly broken. This had been done by a certain memorable burglar or solicitor—or whatever he was—who became angry because her door opened but a few inches and gave it a powerful push. Since then she had come to have a mortal fear of tramps, burglars, solicitors and other uninvited callers of the day and night; and from living so much alone she had a continual sense of the uncer-

tainties of life in Chicago. But *now!* With such nice strong men working below, and such an entrance to her house, she would not need to worry.

Burns, who had taken a humorous liking to her, paused as he set down the stove and said, with an air of apology, that she would probably find his shop considerable of a nuisance. He feared, if she were a particular housekeeper, that there would be much dirt to clean up. He kept a dirty place down below, and as there was no entrance other than his shop, the dirt would track into her kitchen. But all such considerations, he soon found, were as nothing beside that other fact which loomed so large in her mind. It was such a *safe* place to live. "Oh, such a nice, safe place!"

Her attitude toward them became more and more apparent. She had adopted Burns and his shop. Very plainly they were the strong and swart retainers of a Castle Sonderberg through whose sturdy ranks the invader would have to pass before he could reach the inner hold. Those were her men down below. And if these men had not gathered as much from her talk about the chain bolt, they would soon have come to know it from the fond and trustful look in those china blue eyes.

To David it became plain that she looked upon them very much as one looks upon the crew of a ship, throwing in her lot with them and trusting them absolutely in matters of life and death. And then, as he cast another look in the direction of the blue sea-chest, and connected it up with the strange simplicity of her nature, things began to explain themselves. They were all that way, those northern seafaring races. Fighting the ocean all their lives, a little band of them coping with its imminent dangers, they were used to being joined together in a compact of life and death—all of which calls for the very simplest set of relations. As she was one of that sort—and of a nature that is rather at sea on land—the men below would naturally seem a crew

to her, especially as she had just taken passage with them and was about to embark on another voyage through the dangerous waters of Chicago. Then, too, she was a woman; and (as he again reflected) naturally fitted to be somebody's mother.

"Oh, don't worry about any burglars here," said Burns, who, being about to return to work, put some lengths of stovepipe together and jammed them into place with remarkable lack of difficulty. "You'll be pretty safe here." With which assurance he started back to the shop.

"Yes, I guess you need not worry for a while," added David. "Just fix the place up to suit yourself and everything will be all right."

Jim Burns, having paused a moment at the head of the stairs, came back. He opened a door leading from the little front room, which would serve as her parlor, and showed another room which seemed to be a workshop.

"If you are afraid of things at night, I guess I had better explain to you about this room. It is used by one of my neighbor's boys—a young man who works in a piano factory. He makes these things. They are musical instruments for vaudeville performers and such. That queer thing is a marimba. Sometimes they work in here nights; and Mr. Vose is likely to come almost any time of night. Mr. Vose is blind. He is a piano tuner and musician; and he comes here to examine the work and put it into perfect tune. So if you should hear someone coming up the stairs at night, and then scratching and filing away here without any light, you will know it is Mr. Vose."

"In the dark?" exclaimed Mrs. Sonderberg.

"Yes. He is blind. And a blind man doesn't need any lamp."

"I am so glad you told me. Because I would have been scared."

"Yes. And I guess I had better tell him, too. If he

came up at night and found somebody here he would be puzzled. But you need not mind him; he is a very fine man. And besides, he doesn't have to come in through your place. You see there is another door opening out of that room into the hall. He uses that. And you have the key to the door between you. I put it here on your side and lock it."

Having thus "fixed her up" with fine foresight of all possible complications, Burns turned the place over to her and went back to work.

"Yes," continued David, when Burns had got down stairs, "I guess you will find it all right here. Fix it up to suit yourself. I will make everything all right with Burns. He is a pretty good fellow, Burns is."

"Yes. And *you*. You are such a fine, good young man."

She now stood directly in front of him, looking up at him worshipfully as he was on the point of leaving. Then her attention went higher and seemed to be fixed on the scar.

"Are you a—soldier?" she ventured.

"Yes. I was one."

"And you were over in France?"

"Yes."

"And got *that* there?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

Besides looking him so fully in the eye, she was now fondly stroking his arm. Along with this unconscious manifestation of affection, David thought he saw a sort of dampness coming into her eyes; and feeling that she was about to pay him a tribute of tears he was uneasy and disconcerted. But what she really did was more surprising. Rising on her toes, and taking a fuller grasp of his arm to steady herself, she kissed him!

It was a most deliberate and quiet kiss, full and firm on the lips.

Not knowing what sort of reply to make to this expression of opinion, he lost no time in "getting out of there." He went down the stairs and through Burns's shop without looking either to the right or the left.

Out on the street again he felt flustered and a little cheap —like a soldier who, having unintentionally distinguished himself, has had to stand up and have a medal pinned on him. At the same time he was exalted and inwardly warmed.

CHAPTER III

On the following Saturday afternoon David's thoughts again turned to the little Mansard building in the alley. When he finally got through with his duties at the factory it was considerably beyond his usual hour, there having been need for his services in getting out a rush order of auto parts for customers in Iowa and Indiana. Since his employment in a supervisory capacity by the auto parts company, he had found that a position of preferment and responsibility carries with it many drawbacks and disadvantages. He was now one of those who receive a salary rather than wages—a sort of pay which carries no overtime with it. And being a trusted man, he was freely called upon to stay after hours and help the firm out in cases of emergency.

With the consignment of parts ready for shipment between two and three o'clock, he repaired to his favorite barber shop, scrubbed up with his usual Saturday thoroughness, and soon made his appearance in the new pepper-and-salt suit.

Since the Saturday of his adventure, he had seen nothing of Mrs. Sonderberg, and heard little except in the course of a hurried call at Burns's shop on Wednesday. As he was working extra hours he had little time to spare, but from the reports of Burns and one of his men he learned that his old lady had made a great hit. She had sewed on innumerable buttons, put two patches on Bixby's overalls and darned his socks. Besides which she had taken a reef in some underclothes which did not fit him. From this her reputation spread up the alley to Farley the truck driver,

who, being a strong and hearty man of the "clothes buster" variety, and having no folks of his own, was particularly anxious to meet her. She had virtually made Farley over from stem to stern. Now he always waved his hand at her when he passed her window on his truck, and he had begun to call her Ma.

With such reports coming to him from the home he had so unceremoniously brought into being, David Mann was much interested in paying it a visit. Consequently, when he reached Burns's place of business that Saturday afternoon, he did not pause in the shop but proceeded directly upstairs.

Mrs. Sonderberg, who was seated in one of the little dormer windows with the sewing basket beside her, received him with great enthusiasm. To Mr. Mann's relief she did not offer to kiss him. But such was the warmth of her affection for him, and the almost childish candor of her nature, that he regarded it a mere matter of chance that she had not done so.

"And how are you getting along?" he inquired.

"Oh, *so* fine. And such nice men! They do everything for me."

"And bring you work?"

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed. "And now I have these shirts to fix for Mr. Mullen who works for the tea company. You see I am putting new bands on them. Why, when I worked on the Hardanger embroidery and fancy work for babies I had to wait so long for my money. And it was such slow, hard work and nobody seemed to care. But *men!*"

Mrs. Sonderberg's attitude toward her newly discovered opportunities in life seemed to be condensed in that one phrase "But *men!*" And during a moment's pause she surveyed Mr. Mann from head to foot as if she were looking for a part that needed repair. But the new spring suit was as yet proof against woman's attention.

"And if you had not come along and brought me to this place," she continued, "I would never have got acquainted with these men. And they all need someone to tend to them. But here I am keeping you standing and never asking you to sit down."

She offered him a wooden rocker with a concave wooden back and a cushion of gay patchwork in the seat. But David, the better to look about the place, remained standing.

The little front room, so lately a place of cobwebs and dust and the oppressive odor of vacancy, had undergone a great change. The old atmosphere seemed to have been moved out and a complete new atmosphere (which she might have brought with her) installed in its place. The bric-a-brac which he had noticed on the sidewalk now occupied a shelf against the chimney together with a further array of household ornaments, and there was a brightly colored and fresh looking carpet on the floor. Her limited quarters, which should have seemed crowded with their contents, had taken on an air of snugness, like the cabin of a ship. A particular quality of cleanliness and household arrangement gave him at once the impression of a sailorlike sense of order, each chair and ornament, from the smallest to the largest, seeming to know its place and to occupy it as if it had long been subjected to the strictest sort of marine discipline. Contributing most to this sea-change, were the little windows, which had been polished inside and out so that they gave a crystalline aspect even to the murky atmosphere of Chicago.

David, in his first mental picture of the place, had put little lace curtains in those dormer windows. He was now interested in noting that the lace curtains were there. They were parted in the middle and neatly looped back.

Being so much interested in these nooklike windows, he went over to the one that commanded the widest prospect and looked out to see whether the outlook came up to his

expectations. But he could not get fully into it because of the sea-chest, which had been set against the wall to serve as a window seat.

"Were some of your people sailors?" he asked, pointing down at the chest.

"My father made that," she answered. "He was a sailor. But when I was a girl he settled down for a while and had a hotel over there."

"Over there?"

"Yes. I mean over in Sweden. The hotel came from my mother's people; and then my father left the sea and stayed at home. You see his name is painted on it." And she pointed to the name, Magnus Lindquist, done in white paint like the round rope-plaited handles.

"Oh, I see. You are Swedish."

"But I could almost say I came from Norway," she explained. "The hotel was almost on the line; and I used to play over in Norway a great deal. I could show you a picture of it."

She lifted the lid of the sea-chest with the intention of showing him the picture; and then, remembering that it was packed near the bottom, she gave up the idea and satisfied herself with a description.

The hotel was a small one, but it was a very good building. "A nice, neat building," she said. Its location was much to its advantage, and a great many respectable folk stopped there in passing from one country to the other. "And one time," she added, after a reflective pause, "—one time the king stopped there."

"Hard luck," mused David.

She looked at him inquiringly, as if his remark did not fit in.

"I mean it was tough lines to come from a hotel that the king stopped at and then be set out on the sidewalk."

"Yes. I did get into trouble. But *you!* You were so good to me."

So far, her explanation of how she came to be set out on the sidewalk had been but fragmentary. And now, as Mr. Mann consented to take the chair she had offered him, she told him more about the case.

Her husband had been employed by a foreign steamship company. When he died, the manager began sending her a little monthly allowance, which, along with what she made by her embroidery and knitting, enabled her to get along. But when the passenger business went to pieces during the war, the manager left the city to take up some other line, and the allowance ceased to come. Here her troubles began. Being of a domestic nature, strongly attached to home and unaccustomed to "working out," she kept on with the idea that she could make ends meet. She knew she was slowly going down, but it was against her nature to give up. She worked longer hours, staying up late and losing sleep like a sailor manning the pumps. But it was a losing fight. What with the increased cost of living, the loss of income and the raise in her rent, her efforts were of little avail. And then, although she had but six dollars to offer the collector when he came around, she kept on working and hoping. Her account of it sounded to David very much like a story of a Captain who was bound to stick to the ship even while it is going down. So that, as he had already begun to suspect, that home which he had come across in his Saturday afternoon walk was nothing but a wreck—a shipwreck. Mrs. Sonderberg had come to grief on the curbstone; and there was nothing left for her to do but sit there amid her scattered hopes while the busy currents of Chicago went eddying around her.

"This is what they sent me," she said, pointing to the legal notice. "I knew it was going to happen, but I kept

on thinking I might be able somehow to fetch about. And then it was so sudden."

"Well, I guess you're safe here," observed David. "It looks that way. How about the blind man? Did he scare you? Or did you scare him?"

"Oh—Mr. Vose! He is not like a blind man at all. He hardly acts like a blind man, except that he works in the dark. And he doesn't talk like one. And we didn't scare each other that first night he came up. Mr. Burns had introduced us and explained everything. And when Mr. Vose found how foolish I was about burglars he got up a way for me to know it is him. Just before he comes upstairs he raps three times with his cane on the bottom step. He thought of that himself and he never forgets to do it. He is well educated and is a very nice man."

Mrs. Sonderberg paused in what was evidently a mood of deep reflection. Then she smiled and took on a look of self deprecation.

"I am so foolish," she continued. "I guess Mr. Vose thinks I will never learn *anything*."

"Were you scared anyway?"

"Oh, no. Not of Mr. Vose. But he had a hard time teaching me that he was blind. That first night when he came up to work he rapped three times on the bottom step just as he said he would, and I knew right away it was Mr. Vose. So then I picked up the lamp and went to the head of the stairs with it and stood there lighting the way up. And when he unlocked his door, and it was all dark in there, I lit the way in and then set the lamp down and left it for him. A person would think I didn't know any better. In a little while I heard him rapping on the door between me and him, and when I turned the key and opened it he was standing there with the lamp in his hand and kind of smiling. He said that I had better take the lamp back, because it was a waste of good oil to give anything like that

to him. He always worked in the dark. So then I took the lamp back; and when it came over me that he was really blind and a lamp didn't do him any good, I felt so sorry that I could have cried. I guess he must have noticed how I felt because he laughed a little and made a joke of it. So then I asked him if he wouldn't sit down, and he did. He made quite a visit. And after a while he went back into his own room and shut the door. And then I could here him working. And that queer instrument going *tump-tump-tump* so that he could tell when he had it in tune. He is very polite—and he just made a joke of it! He isn't the kind of a blind man that expects people to help him and pity him. That is the hardest thing for me to get used to. Because when I forget to pity him I forget that he is blind."

"And he had a hard job teaching you to forget?"

"Yes. And that isn't all. The next evening he got thirsty and wanted a drink. He knocked on that door between us and wanted to know if I would let him go out in my kitchen for some water. He said he was used to going through my room to get it. So I took up the lamp and went ahead because it was all dark in there. He must have known in some way that I had the lamp, because when he got back into the front room he smiled again and said I need not bother to do anything like that for him because he was *blind*. He did not need help like a person that can see. When he said that I felt so ashamed and so all-mixed-up that I could hardly set the lamp down. I guess he thinks I am too foolish to ever learn what a lamp is for."

"You don't ever want to set that lamp on his bench again," said David, soberly. "He might knock it over and set the whole place on fire."

"Oh, he wouldn't do that," she answered. "I guess he could follow you all around just by the heat of the lamp if he wanted to. He knows it is there. And he doesn't make

any wrong moves. He knows what other people don't; and it is all different. He can go from here to his boarding house without help, and he keeps right on the sidewalk. He knows where every tool is and can pick it up just like playing on a piano. Or on that marimba in there. He says that being blind is a trade in itself; and after you have studied for years how to get along without eyes it is like any other skilled trade. He says that some parts of being blind is such fine work that you might call it a profession. He is so good at it that I guess he is proud of it. And he never expects you to be sorry for him."

"Do you mean to say that he actually works on those musical instruments? Makes them?"

"Yes, he works on them. But he doesn't make them. The young man who works in the piano factory does that. It is his place. But Mr. Vose taught him a lot about music; and he comes up here to see that they are in tune and everything is all right. He has a bag of tools that he uses in piano tuning; and he files and whittles on those metal tubes and rosewood sticks till they make wonderful music. They made a three-man marimba—that's what they call it—for a vaudeville actor; and he came up here to listen to it and was very much pleased. Mr. Vose brought the actor into my room and told him what I could do. And when he found I could sew and mend and press clothes he brought me work. I took the cuffs off the bottom of a pair of his pants and mended the pockets and pressed them and made them just like new. He said that at the present price of clothes it was just like finding money. And he made me take a dollar—just for a little work."

"Well!" remarked David.

"Mr. Vose," she continued, her mind running strongly on her own line of work, "keeps himself very neat. But of course he doesn't always know when he has got a spot on his new vest or when his clothes need a little attention. But

there were a few things he knew about without my telling him; so he brought me his things and I fixed them all up. But of course I wouldn't take any pay from him!" Here she paused and again took a survey of her young man in the immaculate attire. "And if you have anything that needs mending," she added, "—or after a while when the buttons come off—you must bring them right up to me. Anybody who lives in a furnished room needs somebody to keep an eye on their things."

At her mention of the furnished room David looked a little surprised.

"I found that out from Mr. Burns," she explained. "Of course I wanted to know who had been so good to me, so I asked him. And he said that you lived in a furnished room and had no folks."

"Yes, that's right. I have no folks."

As he said nothing to further the conversation, they sat in silence for a while, Mrs. Sonderberg continuing, no doubt, to entertain pleasant thoughts about men and mending. And David, in whose mind a quite different train of thought had been ignited by her remark about his "folks," became absorbed in his own peculiar problem. Suddenly he resumed—

"Do you remember the king at the time he stopped at your place?"

"Oh, yes. He put his hand on my head. And I looked up at him."

"How old were you at that time?"

Mrs. Sonderberg put a finger to her lips and did much thinking before she had worked out the problem.

"I was about five," she answered.

"Do you remember much about him?"

"No, not much. There were a number of people about and I can remember that it was an important occasion. But that is about all I really remember."

"Just a moment or so?"

"Yes. Just that one thing. But I can remember that well. I was standing in the middle of a room with a lot of people about. He said something to me and put his hand on my head. And I looked up at him."

"Yes—that's it! Just a moment! And you were about five!"

Again the conversation came to a halt while David mused upon the point that interested him. And then, without giving Mrs. Sonderberg any explanation of his interest in the king, he took up the thread again.

"When I was about the age you mention I was put out on the sidewalk too. I can remember standing there beside a pile of things. There were people coming and going and I was all alone. There was no one to watch it but me."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Sonderberg. "Was your poor mother put out too?"

"No. She was not my mother. They were not my folks. I was just living with them. And recently I have been trying to remember things. Probably there is no chance of my ever recalling them. But I have been curious to know how far back a person can remember. And what other people's experience has been in trying to remember."

"Oh, I see. Then why don't you get acquainted with Mr. Vose. He remembers things away back. That's his specialty. Yes. He knows a little about colors and the looks of things. But only what he remembers. He went blind when he was a little boy—of scarlet fever. I said to him when I was sewing on some buttons that his suit was a very pretty shade of brown, and I asked him if he picked it out himself. I am so foolish—always forgetting. You see he is not at all like a blind man that is holding out a tin cup to you. Then, of course, he said that he did not know anything about the shade; and that the tailor picked it out for him. Then I asked him if he did not know anything about the blue sky and the sunset out in the country, and the

colors of flowers and birds and the grass in summer. And he said he had a sort of memory of it because he went blind when he was five. And when he wants to know anything like that he goes back and remembers. It is like asking a little boy everything he wants to know. He says there are certain places and certain times that he can still bring back; and he has kept those memories up pretty well because he has been referring to them from the first. He can remember the blue sky; but he doesn't remember anything that was brown. And black he knows best of all."

"I should like to meet him. When will he be coming here again?"

"He does not come very often, usually. He is a piano tuner and is always going round tuning pianos. But he has been up three times this week, and maybe he will be here tonight. He is working on that marimba. Why don't you stay here to supper? It is past suppertime now; and I can get something for both of us."

This idea appealed to David. He had been getting too much of cafeterias and restaurants.

"I will go out to the grocery and butcher shop and get something," he replied, taking up his hat and starting at once, regardless of her protestations. When he came back it was evident that he had invested heavily in all his favorite dishes.

Because of the elaborateness of the meal, and the necessity of getting out the white table-cloth and napkins and the very best china, supper was somewhat delayed; but the delay was more than paid for by the subtle aroma of home cooking that soon began to recommend itself to his nostrils. For once he was going to have a meal that was invested in nothing but its own savory atmosphere—a meal of his *own,* unmixed with that medley of odors that always congregate in those places where one's own meal is being eaten in the midst of a hundred other meals. He noted that Mrs. Son-

derberg was making biscuit—a decision she came to simply by casting her eye upon a comb of honey he had brought her, and without the least suggestion from him. He began to give Mrs. Sonderberg credit for great art in reading one's mind. The supper, as it developed upon the air, was just such a blending of viands as he imagined when he was bringing it home. And presently Mrs. Sonderberg announced that it was ready.

"This is certainly *some supper!*" exclaimed David, reverting to soldier idiom as he drew up his chair. The steak was properly broiled; there were French fried potatoes; the biscuits were white and flaky and were on very harmonious terms with his honey. "Yes, Mrs. Sonderberg. This is certainly getting back to A—merica!"

Under the very intimate circumstances, and inspired especially by the coffee which Mrs. Sonderberg, inheriting the predilection of her race, had made in great quantity, David opened up a secret chamber of his heart and told her a little of his army experience, including, of course, "his finish" at the hospital. This latter he went into just enough, in a matter-of-fact way, to give her an understanding of his present problem—its essential elements when considered *as* a problem.

But Mrs. Sonderberg was hardly one to take a purely scientific view of a young man in search of his mother. In spite of the fact that David went back to the hospital in a strictly logical frame of mind, he found that he could not separate facts from feelings in such a way that Mrs. Sonderberg was not always divining more than he intended. No matter how he stated it, his driest fact caused an overflow of feeling. He was wounded and suffering; he was in a strange country; and he wanted his mother. Seeing which, the mild blue eyes regarded him feelingly and became weepish looking.

This was not entirely unpleasant, although he would have

avoided it; and Mrs. Sonderberg's cooking was a very good antidote to her sorrow. David praised the biscuit in extravagant terms and settled down to enjoy everything at leisure.

By the time he had reached his third cup of coffee, Mrs. Sonderberg suddenly turned her attention from him and began listening. Then she rose from the table and went to the head of the stairs.

There had come three raps on the bottom step.

CHAPTER IV

Aaron Vose, minus his eyes, which were supposed to lead an existence behind a pair of dark spectacles, was a man who impressed you, not as a blind man but as an intellect—some sort of accurate, deep-seeing, well trained intellect. As to what the nature of this training might be, whether scientific or artistic, you could easily be of two opinions; but you would have to incline to one or the other as accounting for his air of quiet competency. Very evidently he was the possessor of a sufficient and accurate knowledge of something-or-other, and a man who knew his way about in the world.

His features were spare and rather dark. And the quality of the darkness was not sallow or ascetic or southern, but rather the natural hue of a well seasoned, wholesomely pigmented, out-of-door man. And his spareness was that of activity. His normal aspect was one of pleasant passiveness, the pleasantness seeming to find expression in his mouth, and especially in a full lower lip which had something in it of a patient, benevolent nature not easily perturbed. At times, converging wrinkles gathered at the outer corners of his eyes, or rather of his dark spectacles, which, for the moment, passed well enough for eyes; and while he seldom smiled outright, a shade of understanding and of humorous apprehension passed over his face in a way that was sufficiently expressive. This, with his usually thoughtful cast of countenance, made him a most encouraging listener.

The pleasant passiveness, even when he was not listening, had nothing blank about it. When he was not especially

engaged in thought he was always musing, in which case his lips would pucker slightly as if in low whistling. It was evident that his lighter meditations were usually set to music. But when he was really thinking, and deeply engaged on a mechanical or other problem, all this was changed. All expression passed away except that of perfect mental equilibrium, and he took on somewhat the inscrutable wisdom of a mandarin. Or rather of one of the Magi. And then his darkness became oriental. Here the spectacles seemed to be an advantage to him, as pulling down the curtains; and you felt that his were mental processes which you could see only as through a glass, darkly.

As he came into the room he made his way easily to the chair which Mrs. Sonderberg had selected for him, and which she joggled slightly to indicate its whereabouts. With the merest indication of an exploring touch or two (quite devoid of fumbling) he took hold of the chair and sat down. And being comfortably settled with his cane between his knees, he turned his head like a man surveying his surroundings and took on the usual look of pleased expectancy. Everything about him gave the impression of accuracy and neatness. His trousers bore evidence of having been recently pressed.

"We have just had supper," said Mrs. Sonderberg.

"So I see," he answered.

"And I have with me the young man who got this place for me. Mr. Vose, this is Mr. Mann."

Vose rose and extended his hand.

As the two men sat down again, facing one another, Mrs. Sonderberg drew up a chair and completed the circle. She sat a moment, looking first at Vose and then at Mann.

"Mr. Mann very nearly lost his sight, too," she began.

"He did!"

"Yes. Feel."

She took Vose's hand in hers and guided it to the depres-

sion over Mr. Mann's right eye, and thence along its course down to the cheekbone.

"A bad cut," said Vose.

"And now the other side."

Vose's fingers, finding their own way (as on a piano) now crossed over and came to a rest at a point on the lower edge of the socket.

"Can you feel that?" asked Mrs. Sonderberg.

"Oh, yes. Like raised letters."

"Mr. Mann," she continued, "was wounded in the war. The big one is on his chest. And he was in the hospital a long time and was homesick."

"A shell," explained Mann.

"Ah, yes. Both eyes. It was a close call."

Their acquaintance, so unceremoniously begun, ripened at once into a feeling of intimacy and mutual concern. Mann could note it in Vose's manner—the tone of his voice and a certain change that came over his face; but still more in the dwelling touch of his fingers, which, instead of relinquishing their quest for information, remained to learn more. They passed deftly down the bridge of his nose, along his mouth and over the contours of his face as if he were being modeled. And there was a further touch in the soft passing of those fingers which gave David the impression that he was being fondled. After which Vose nodded his head twice, leaned back in his chair, and repeated, "Ah, yes!"

In Mrs. Sonderberg's way of doing things there was often the directness and simplicity of a child; and something of this masterly simplicity came to the fore in the way she took Vose's hand in hers and brought the two men into this vital contact. Mann was surprised by the connection she had perceived between them, and by the promptness with which she had set to work to establish it.

Vose was now all for listening to stories of the war, while Mrs. Sonderberg was aiming to pass over war and come at

once to the soldier in the hospital and his visions of a mother. But David, disinclined to enlarge upon his army life, decided to be interested in marimbas. Finally he managed a fetch in the conversation which brought them around to that topic.

"Do you know anything about the Guatemalan marimba?" asked Vose.

"No. Not much about any kind."

"Then I will show it to you."

He went to the door connecting the two rooms, turned the key and led the way in. Mrs. Sonderberg followed with the lamp.

The "three-man marimba" was a lengthy instrument with a line of keys like a xylophone, beginning with big, flat rosewood paddles in the bass and diminishing gradually to the little treble keys at the far end. Suspended beneath their respective keys were square wooden pipes or boxes of varying length like an inverted pipe organ; these ranging in size from the big bass pipes over two feet long to shallow little cups beneath the treble. David observed, near the end of each key, on the under side, a chunk of black wax. These chunks of wax, Vose explained, were used in tuning. With his thumb nail he added weight or took it off until the key was in perfect harmony. And near the bottom of each pipe, which ended in the shape of a pyramid, was a little hole about the size of a dime which seemed to be covered from the inside with some sort of membrane.

"Now this is the real Guatemalan marimba," said Vose, picking up two of the padded hammers. "It is the only percussion instrument which has a sustained musical tone on the principle of the pipe organ. Especially in the bass. Now listen."

By a deft plying of the padded hammers he brought forth a peculiar rolling harmony—something between a kettle drum and an organ. It was rich, throaty and deep and of

a decided singing quality. But as he detected a flaw in the harmony he paid attention to the chunks of wax adhering to the under side of the keys, taking off a little weight here and adding some there until, by test strokes of the hammer, it suited his ear.

"Now listen. This is a sort of tone poem."

This time, as the hammers were applied, volumes of strange melody began to rise and roll forth—full singing chords with deep nobility of tone, and weird, unheard-of harmonies that challenged one to follow their meaning. At times Mann thought he heard the grunt and roar of antediluvian animals with threatening rumbles of thunder; then moonlight and bubbling waters; and at times an undertone which he imagined was the muffled call of beings under water. But all these strange tones and contrasts were interspersed with pure harmonies that were delightful to hear.

"That's great!" exclaimed David. "It has a beautiful tone."

"It's not quite perfect," said Vose. "Some keys must be trimmed a little and certain pipes altered in length. They don't exactly fit the tone column. The Guatemalans use the wax in tuning them. I like to get the keys just about right in the first place; and then a little wax is good to allow for variations."

"And these?" said David, stooping down and looking at one of the little holes covered with membrane.

Vose ran his fingers lightly down a pipe till he encountered one of them.

"You will observe," he answered, "that that membrane is not tight. It is loose—has a certain amount of play in it—like a slack drumhead. That is important in giving a certain quality to the bass."

"Oh, tell him about the butcher shop!" exclaimed Mrs. Sonderberg. "And about the sausages. And how you make such lovely music out of a pig!"

Vose smiled.

"Mrs. Sonderberg was very much surprised," he said, "when we sent out to the butcher shop to get material. You see the Guatemalans make these little loose tympans or drumheads out of a certain membrane from the intestines of a hog. I found that I could get sausage casing which had the same quality; so I used it. And Mrs. Sonderberg could hardly believe that very fine music was going to come out of that. I told her it was evident that she did not know how many fine things in music and the arts generally come from the stockyards. She doesn't appreciate the stockyards. I fear Mrs. Sonderberg is not a real Chicagoan. She thinks everything connected with music ought to be romantic—hasn't the scientific point of view. But I could get my violin strings in the butcher shop if I wanted to. That is, if I wanted to roll my own. And there is no nobler instrument than the violin."

"Yes, but it sounded so funny," protested Mrs. Sonderberg. "Out of a *p-e-e-eg!* And then we ate the sausage!"

While this digression amused David, it did not draw his attention away from the mysteries of the marimba. Nor from Vose, in whom he was much interested.

"And you have to figure out the exact length of all those wooden pipes!" he commented. "How do you do it—by a rule or by ear?"

"Both methods, the same as a pipe-organ builder," said Vose. "At first arithmetically, according to the note; and finally by ear."

This allusion took Vose into a lengthy explanation of the similarity, in acoustic science, between pipe organ and marimba building, and finally into the practical difficulties in applying the computations to a marimba pipe with a pyramidal bottom. Here he went into strange terms—open and closed pipes, fundamentals and harmonics, tampions and sliding bells and other things that were all Greek to David.

And all of which, he explained, had to do with the pipe organ.

"Then you understand the pipe organ, too?"

"A little," said Vose. "The Guatemalans have applied a good deal of it in making the marimba. You see, it is not a mere xylophone; it has more scope in every way. And there are not many that know how to make the true marimba."

"Then how did *you* know how to make it?"

"Well—I stole it. When the man wasn't looking."

"Stole it without eyes? How?"

"I guess," observed Vose, "that Mrs. Sonderberg will get tired holding that lamp for us. Maybe we had better go into the other room and sit down."

Following this suggestion the three repaired to Mrs. Sonderberg's front room where Vose, without apparent difficulty, found his way to the high backed rocker. When he had settled himself he took from his coat pocket a briar pipe which he kept neatly in a leather case. Having lit it and laid the extinguished match carefully on the window sill, he puffed a while reflectively.

"Yes, I suppose you might call it stealing. Anyway the Guatemalans would say it was. I got it away from them. You see I used to travel, some years ago, with a blind men's trio. We went all over the country. Jurgens was a very good violinist, and Selden was quite a 'cellist. I was the pianist. From being in that line and stopping at hotels we frequently came in contact with show people. One time we stopped at a hotel where there were three Guatemalans who played with a vaudeville show. They kept their marimba rather secret. When they were not playing it they put it away and would not allow anybody to look it over closely or have much to do with it. But during the time they had been in this country they had become interested in the piano; and they took a great fancy to my playing. They thought

it was very wonderful. After they got acquainted with me they allowed me free access to the marimba. I felt it over carefully, got the points and saw the idea. You see they thought that because I was blind it wouldn't make any difference. I couldn't steal the fine points."

"I see. So you used to travel! Did you do well—make money I mean?"

"Yes. We did. We stopped at fairly good hotels. We made plenty of money. And I suppose that if all of us had had sense we would have kept it up longer. But out in Denver we got into a big row and broke up."

"Who with?"

"With each other."

"What about?"

"Poker. We got to playing a little among ourselves. You see we didn't have much to amuse ourselves with. I didn't have anyone to read the papers to me regularly at that time; and we couldn't go around and see the sights. So we got to playing poker."

"And you knew which card was which?"

"Oh, yes. We were all used to reading raised letters, so it was easy enough to make marks with a hard pencil that we could all read by touch. That and a little memory is all that is necessary. So we played poker right along and our money kept passing back and forth. And then Jurgens got to cheating. And Selden and I didn't know it for some time. I never was so mad at anything in my life. You see we trusted one another to a considerable extent. Selden and I would not cheat. I would have knocked Jurgens down with my chair if I could have found just where he was. I did go at him several times, but he wasn't there."

Vose paused while he took several long, meditative puffs at his pipe.

"A blind man's fight is rather uncertain," he continued. "I hit Selden a blow thinking it was Jurgens. And when I

found I had made a mistake I was madder than ever—and puzzled. And Selden got mad at me. A blind man's fight doesn't usually amount to much—not unless all three are enemies and are willing to come right together and mix it up. Then it doesn't amount to much as a fight; it is just mutual punishment and a game of chance. As it was, Selden and I damaged each other considerable and the one that was guilty got away. I wouldn't travel any longer with a man like Jurgens; I was completely disgusted. And as we had lost our violinist we had to disband. And I came back to Chicago."

"And what did you do then?" inquired David.

"I went to work in the piano factory. I was in the tuning department. But I don't do factory work now. I don't like the conditions."

"Too much routine?" suggested David.

"Yes. And too much hurry. Too much grab and get. They used to be quite well satisfied if you tuned twelve or fourteen pianos a day. Now they want you to do sixteen to eighteen."

"Just to think!" put in Mrs. Sonderberg, standing in astonishment with the half folded table cloth before her. "They would even grind down a poor blind man!"

"Yes—if the poor blind man would let them," added Vose calmly. "Now I have an arrangement with several piano stores. They send me out whenever a customer calls for a piano tuner. Besides that I have my own customers; and it keeps me pretty busy. I have tuned pianos"—he said it with a distinct air of satisfaction—"for some well known public performers. And they are very particular about their tuner."

During this exchange between the two men, Mrs. Sonderberg had been busy with her housework, clearing the table, brushing up the crumbs and putting away dishes and table

linen. When, finally, she had stowed the last napkin in the sea chest, she made haste to sit down with them again. And now it became evident that the business of importance —her soldier boy's problem—was no longer to be neglected.

CHAPTER V

With her usual directness, Mrs. Sonderberg broke right into the conversation. And David was surprised to find that, while she went into some very lengthy discursions, and dwelt rather longer than he could have wished upon the childish adventure of the tumble-bug, she really seized the whole point of the problem and stated it in essence. Notwithstanding her emotional nature, and her tendency to linger over the bed of the suffering soldier till she could hardly keep back her tears, she kept the main question to the fore. She was, in truth, so desirous of helping him that his interests quite overruled her emotions and ended in her setting forth the problem in so pointed a way that little remained to be said.

"Yes," added David, by way of toning down the human warmth she had put into the matter, "it is a point in mental science that has been interesting me. I had to go back and remember—or try to. And that brings up the question in general. How far back can a person remember? And what hope is there in trying to force one's memory back to those early years?"

Vose had refilled his pipe and got it comfortably going. Contrary to the general belief that a man does not enjoy smoking unless he can see the smoke, Vose seemed to take great comfort in it. And he knew, moreover, when the smoke had ceased to come. And as he smoked in various moods, now meditatively and at leisure, and again with shorter, more vigorous puffs, it even served him as a means of self expression.

"Well," he replied, "that would be a hard question to de-

termine exactly. The things that impress a child, and leave such a deep mark on his mind that they survive in after years, are usually the merest trifles. They are not things that have any connection with important world affairs. He does not think of them in that relation. Consequently, when you go back to one of these early memories and try to get a date for it, you cannot do it. There is nothing with which to link it up and identify it in point of time.

"With a grown-up experience it is all different. When you think back you recall that it was during Garfield's administration—shortly after the torchlight parade; or it was just when you were moving into the new house. And as these things are of sufficient importance to have a date, you have a means of knowing when the less important thing happened. Thus you can determine how old you were. It is linked up in your mind with world history; you were at that time noting things of general interest.

"But a child's memories are all different. A mere momentary trifle may make a lifelong impression. But it is a mere disconnected incident. The rest of the world passed through the mind as through a sieve. And so I daresay that if you had your mother right here this evening, and you were to ask her what year it was that you saw that particular tumblebug, you would find that she never knew you had such an experience. You almost forgot it yourself. But it had made such a deep impression that it remained hidden away somewhere in a corner of your mind, and later, when you were in the right mood, it came back to you. The child lives in a world by itself. It is not concerned with the things that we call important—human history and calendar dates. And so you cannot go back and say how old you were; there is no way of giving a date to one of those mental pictures. I have had considerable experience with that matter in my *own* mind. And when you recall one of those faraway memories from which all association has fallen away, and

which never did exist in any important connection—a mere picture standing all by itself—the chances are that it will never call up anything else. And you cannot locate it in time. And no person can ever help you."

"Yes," mused David. "The child lives in a world of its own. And no one can ever help you."

"Now in my own case," continued Vose, "I am able to identify anything as having happened before or after my fifth year. It was then I went blind. I have a great landmark—a dividing line. If I can see it as a picture, then I know it was sometime in the first five years. But that is about all. You have observed, have you not, that these memories are strongly visual?"

"Oh, yes. Just pictures. They are momentary, and do not change."

"Yes. You see everything very plainly, just as it existed at that moment when the impression was made. I remember once I had a red sled. It was made with solid board runners and was very red. Now I must have slid down hill on that sled or been pulled around on it; but that I do not remember. But I recall it plainly one day when it was leaning up against the corner of the house in the sunshine. I was waiting for the paint to dry. I was very anxious. I put my finger on it and felt it. And now when I recall that sled I can only see it as it existed at the corner of the house waiting for the paint to dry. And at the moment when I was putting my finger on it. But it is very vivid in that way; so that now 'red' and 'sled' are very similar terms in my mind. And all sleds are red. As such memories are very useful to me, I have gone back to my early memories from the first. I have a very complete stock of them—have kept them up more than other people might do. And sometimes I wish I had more of them. But in between those important moments of my early life, all is blank. I am as blind to that world as I am to this."

"Yes," said David. "That is just it. In between you can see nothing. I am as blind as you are."

"I wish I could do something—or think of something—that would help you. I probably remember a greater number of things than you do, having started so early in life to look back and review them. But in between I am blind. For five years I could see. What has become of those years—of all those days? That time—and all that daylight—is lost. It is gone beyond recall. It cannot be brought back."

There was something in this of such deep regret, and conveying such a poignant sense of loss, that David congratulated himself that he still had eyes and could see.

"But you remember your folks, don't you?" asked David. "And your mother?"

"Oh, yes."

David changed his mind. He decided that he was more blind than Mr. Vose.

"Yes—that's the way it is," mused Vose. "That time is gone."

"Then there is no use in my trying to remember," said David. "I have gone back as far as I can and thought of everything."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that. Not in your case. You will probably recall other things. Sometime a memory like that might flash into your mind upon suggestion. You can't tell."

"Do you remember such things upon suggestion? Things that never occurred to you before?"

"Well, hardly. Not in my case. You must remember that I have been blind a long time; and I have been thinking back a long time. But you have been blind—I mean that you have been thinking back—for only a short while."

"Then you think I had better keep on trying?"

"Yes. Though I would hardly call it *trying*. You can't do such things by trying. Just keep it in mind in a general

way. You naturally will. Such a memory—the one you are looking for—might come suddenly, upon suggestion. An odor might bring something back. A remembered odor is very inspiring—very active upon the mind. Anything very pleasant; or anything that inspired terror. It has to be a deep or peculiar impression; and the slightest incident might serve as a clue. Some day you will think of it. And then you will be able to find your mother."

This last remark sounded to David rather too much like the cheerful assurances of Miss Alvord. It rather discouraged him, being too evidently born out of sympathy with his case. Altogether he had not learned much. And yet, in certain regards, Vose's observations had been helpful and gave him reasons for hope.

The conversation being now free to wander where it listed, it took all sorts of unforeseen and interesting turns, so that time passed quickly. Presently Vose consulted his watch. "It's after nine," he remarked; and rose to go.

"I'll walk home with you," offered David.

"Oh, you don't need to do that," said Vose. "Though I am always pleased to have somebody along. I can make the crossings all right."

"I am going in your direction anyway. I might as well go now."

Out on the street it occurred to David that Vose, while he had gone up to work on the marimba, had done nothing. Neither had he betrayed any consciousness that his plans were being interfered with.

"I spoiled your plans for you," said David. "You did not get anything done."

"Oh, that makes no great difference. I can do it tomorrow night just as well. In fact, I went up there mostly to have Mrs. Sonderberg read to me. She is a very pleasant reader and has a good voice. Very pleasant and musical."

It occurred to David that this was true. He had not

estimated Mrs. Sonderberg's voice separately nor considered what effect her personality might have if revealed through her voice alone.

In Vose's pocket was a large roll of newspapers. He had taken them out and laid them on the floor beside him when he sat down in the chair which Mrs. Sonderberg joggled for him; and on going out he had gathered them up and put them in his pocket again.

"Do you keep pretty good track of the news?" inquired David.

"Yes. Fairly. I like to know what's going on. The newsboy that I get to read for me isn't very reliable. He doesn't always show up. And when he does he just reads the words off as if they had no connection with one another—says them all in a string, you know. I have to put the sense together myself. But Mrs. Sonderberg is a very intelligent reader. There is live feeling in what she reads. And music. I think she would have made a singer. I have been following the league of nations in a general way."

"And what do you think of it?" asked David.

"There seems to be a difference of opinion. So far it strikes me a good deal like the blind men's trio. Pretty much in the dark. And likely to end in a row."

Here they came to a crossing, and Vose, without any intimation from David, slackened his pace and began tapping with his cane as if he knew he was about to take a step down to the street. To David, he seemed to have a sixth sense which went ahead of him and kept him informed. More mysterious than this foreknowledge of the crossings (which, he explained, was merely a matter of observing that the sidewalk always takes a slope downward at corners of streets) was his ability to keep to the middle of the sidewalk without assistance. This was not so easily explained. It was a "sort of skilled trade," he said. To David it seemed an art and a mystery.

David observed (and this set him thinking most of all) that Vose, having him for a guide, walked briskly—struck right out into the unknown without the least hesitation in his step. He did not have the least trace of that careful stealth which he used when he went alone. Thus they went along at a rapid pace. It was an expression of utter confidence in his conductor—of faith that was entire. This made an impression on David and set him thinking. He wondered whether, if *he* were blind, he would be able to resign himself with such complete faith to the care of another.

Walking thus briskly, they soon turned into Morgan street; and then proceeded (as per Vose's instructions) in the direction of Mrs. Bradlaw's boarding house, a formerly dignified residence with a stone face that was flat and yellowish, and had a flight of stone steps, like a pair of Assyrian whiskers carved on the aforesaid yellowish face, reaching down to the street. Here David bade his new acquaintance good-bye, leaving him at the bottom of the steps and retracing his way to his own furnished room, which he had passed without mentioning the fact to Vose.

CHAPTER VI

For some time David had been bothered, not to say perplexed, by a growing desire to change his rooming place. Ordinarily, the way for a young man to change his rooming place is to change it; but he did not like to pull up stakes and leave behind him what would seem mere ingratitude for benefits received. And as he had no reason for moving which would seem valid either to himself or anybody else, it was a troublesome problem.

Logically, he had every reason to stay and be satisfied. But yet the feeling persisted that he had better change his rooming place and leave no trace behind him. The question was, how to get a sufficient excuse—a polite lie, to put it plainly—and how to manage the leavetaking. It was not so easily done; and so this matter, which would, under less delicate circumstances, have been a mere business procedure, took on the guise of a break for freedom, a plan of escape.

The whole difficulty finally brought itself up for solution on a Sunday morning. On this morning, having risen early, he pulled down the shades, poured a liberal quantity of tepid water from pitcher to bowl, and proceeded to take a sponge bath. His eye rested, meanwhile, on the little mirror, which, by some special genius for refraction, always selected for his contemplation the big scar on his left breast and its continuation on his upper arm. When he had got through with that part of himself which came within the jurisdiction of the mirror, he dwelt with more particularity and several moments' curious attention on the scar on his left ankle. While he usually paid little attention to his larger wounds (they having now become a part of him) this little cicatrice on his ankle, with its three white forks radiating like strokes of

lightning from a common center, always engaged and held his attention. It seemed to him that he was carrying around on his body a picture of an explosion.

When he was partially dressed, his attention turned suddenly toward the door. There was a sound of footsteps on the back stairs. As he expected, they came up the length of the hall. Then they ended at his door.

After a little pause, during which he stood stock still, the footsteps receded by way of the kitchen stairs. When he heard the kitchen door close, he opened his own door, and, with his eye on the threshold, as one might look for the morning paper, he stood looking perplexedly at a large glass of milk.

He took it up and carried it over to the wash-stand where he set it down and began contemplating it again. But there is little to be gained by contemplating a glass of milk; and as there seemed to be no other logical conclusion he took it up and drank it. After which, instead of going on with his dressing, he fell into a brown study.

Lizzie Norton, the niece of the woman in whose house he was the only roomer, had left just such a large, creamy glass of milk at his door every morning for over a month. And he had taken it in and drunk it.

On the morning when this first happened to him he was somewhat surprised. But not, as he now saw, as surprised as he *ought* to have been. A combination of circumstances had made it seem quite natural to him.

Lizzie, a wholesome and comely country girl about his own age, was recently in from the farm. She had come to live with her aunt in the city. She had a brother-in-law in Chicago who was proprietor of a milk depot. The aunt and uncle with whom she lived were evidently well circumstanced, the keeping of a roomer being no great financial matter to them. In view of these combined circumstances, the glass of milk on his threshold translated itself into a

quite ordinary circumstance. It was a little token, upon the part of the household, toward the soldier in their midst.

But as the morning glass of milk continued to be left there week after week, and grew more rich and creamy as time went on, and he found it was Lizzie who left it there (whether with her aunt's knowledge or not he could only wonder), he began to feel that he was growing rather deeply indebted. Beside which, milk had been steadily going up in price. And then, as other circumstances arose—which he was rather late in seeing in their true light—he found himself confronted with the problem of moving.

The fact was that that morning offering was something more than a mere glass of milk. It was an oblation, a bid for favor—and if it had been pure cream it would probably not have seemed to Lizzie to be food too rich for him. But he had accepted it as a sort of gift to Uncle Sam, a thing intended not personally but for a soldier—a point of view not unnatural to one who had so recently been benefited by little remembrances which came to him "over there" and which he accepted gladly as a soldier in general from the sex at large. And this prolongation of an army point of view may have blinded him a little to the fact that in this case it was himself that was the soldier.

Thus, through no act of his own, and by degrees which he could hardly trace, he woke up to find that he had become Lizzie's "fellow."

This was rather a surprise to him. He had never taken her to the theater, or made her presents of candy, or done any of the things which betoken an urban courtship. It had (as he now saw) been rather a country courtship; and Lizzie, whose refreshing and healthy country ways seemed to give her a special license, and who was as ripe for mating as a bird of the air, seemed to have brought it all about herself. It had advanced naturally in ways which he did not recognize.

As near as he could see, the whole affair had its start one evening when Lizzie asked him if he did not want to take a walk with her and Madge Peebles who were going to make a call upon her sister whose husband had the milk depot. It was a pleasant evening when such impromptu excursions seemed natural, and the distance was not far to walk. He went along, between the two girls, and had a good time. Before long the visit was repeated. And again Madge went along. She was a rather squat and broad shouldered girl—not nearly so well proportioned as Lizzie.

After several such pleasant excursions the girls conceived a great idea. The three would take a lunch and have a picnic on Sunday afternoon in Garfield park. Lizzie broached this, the joint idea of Madge and herself, to him; and having received his approval their plans for the picnic went merrily ahead.

It proved a most enjoyable picnic. The girls brought a bounteous lunch—salad and sandwiches and cake and many dainties upon which they had taken great pains; and when these were all spread out on a white table-cloth on the grass, and the cups were filled with fragrant coffee from the thermos bottle, the sole young man of the occasion could not but feel the advantages in being a soldier and knowing two girls who were such dainty housekeepers and good cooks. Madge, while she had undecided blonde hair and an uninteresting complexion and far too sturdy a frame, was pleasant company simply by the pleasure she took in everything —a "good, honest" girl, in his estimate, who deserved to be prettier.

Lizzie, the comely product of fresh air and freedom and wholesome country pursuits, seemed specially designed for such a scene as this. With the blue sky above, and the trees and greensward all around, and an exhibit of her housewifery set down in the midst of it, Lizzie was in her native element. They went on an excursion through the park and

found amusement where one might least expect it. To David's surprise the girls even laughed at the orchids in the green-house (which Madge thought were "awfully funny"), and so they made merry till sundown; and when it came time to catch a car they had had such an *awfully* good time and found so many occasions for laughter that they decided they had got to have another such outing before very long.

After several such little occasions, in none of which there was any element of courtship, David began to see that he had become, in some sense, Lizzie's "fellow." They had scarcely been alone together for a moment in all that time; and so far as he was aware he had shown no preference between the two. The fact that he was hers seemed to have established itself through Madge, who, from the first time they went out together, took that attitude toward them. She kept in mind, always, that he was Lizzie's young man rather than her own—a thing never pointedly expressed but manifested in a hundred little ways which served to establish the distinction and keep it to the fore. Then, too, Lizzie's relatives at the milk depot, whose country manners and hearty hospitality were rather refreshing, seemed to take him in that character. But as this was a natural mistake on their part, he thought little of it.

However it might have been—he could not exactly tell—this conception of him was becoming established. The glass of milk, which at first surprised and then amused him, was being left regularly at his door. And at this stage of affairs it occurred to him that he had better start comporting himself in some way that would prevent his getting more deeply in debt.

But what should he do? He might cease to be a guest at Sunday outings, finding excuses which would serve; and he might show a disinclination to take evening strolls with two well meaning and perfectly proper young ladies. But this was going rather far in the way of unsociability. The

real point, after all, was this matutinal tribute of milk. He might tell her that he did not like milk—but it was rather too late for that! And besides being untrue it would not serve to bring the point home to her. He would have to tell her plainly not to leave milk at his door any longer—that he did not wish to take milk from her, and that, in short, the milk had no *meaning* to him.

But no one had ever said that it *had* a meaning. It might be quite natural for a girl with country points of view, and with whom milk was a familiar commodity, to think that a young man might like a glass of milk every morning. It seemed like making a great pother about nothing. And yet it was too evidently about *something*. He could no longer disguise from himself the fact that Lizzie was, to some extent, in love with him. It had been a growing attachment. And the fact that she had left no message with the milk, and that he had made no sentimental acknowledgment, was entirely beside the point. It was a thing to be understood. And he had drunk the milk.

In view of the circumstances, he felt inclined to change his rooming place. But he could hardly do this without some sort of leavetaking, and an acknowledgement of benefits received. And these thanks, in view of the milk, were due to Lizzie herself. He would have to thank her for some thirty or forty pints of creamy milk as if—What a sickly pretense!—they had no meaning beyond an ordinary courtesy to a roomer. He found it difficult to do that and very ungracious to do anything else. Sometimes the thought occurred to him that it would be best to pay his rent and unceremoniously get out.

But such a departure hardly seemed warranted. After all, they had done nothing to him except to treat him kindly. The world already had a sufficient reputation for ingratitude without his adding to it. And so he would give up the problem for a while. Such an ado about a few glasses of milk!

Finally the thing worked itself out. It happened on a Saturday evening. The family had been out on the porch enjoying the cool breeze; and he and Lizzie, instead of going for chairs, had disposed themselves against the porch rail, half leaning and half sitting on its flat top. Becoming tired of this position, he found it more comfortable to sit directly on top of it; and by the time the family had departed Lizzie had taken a like position beside him. As they talked he swung his foot idly back and forth; and Lizzie began to swing hers in unison. But not only that. Her foot and leg took hold of his by close contact; and soon, instead of merely swinging in unison with him, her foot became the propelling force. And thus they were uniting in a sort of amatory rhythm like a loving couple in a swing. And when he was disposed to stop it, she kept it up.

This was "enough" for David Mann. Right here he came to the point of revolt. He was not in love with her; and he did not like this sort of thing. Here was definite warning; and it must not go any farther. With firm insistence he stopped the swinging of his leg; and then he found occasion to go to his room.

On the following morning, which was Sunday, he found himself in the same state of mind. The thing for him to do was to leave; and the time to do it was now—or at least as soon as he saw the opportunity. As for taking leave of Lizzie, and thanking her for her attentions as if they had meant nothing out of the ordinary, he had no intention of going through any such mockery. And as to any allusion to *sentiment* in their relations, that was unthinkable. Lizzie had taken up with him without any encouragement; and now she could proceed to forget him.

He was in a mood, not of revulsion toward her, but of revolt. He could not but think kindly of Lizzie, and (except as exercised against him) admire her forehandedness. She was a healthy country girl with country instincts of court-

ship; and there was something abstractly commendable in the way she fell in with the great plan of nature and pushed it along. But her way was not his way; and she had been altogether too transparent about it. Love and marriage, according to his view, was a thing to be brought about upon the man's part; and he had no fancy for drifting along into it idly and by chance. Still less would be he "railroaded" into it. In this regard there was a plentiful supply of stubbornness in his nature; and he was decidedly a conservative.

Thinking the whole matter over, there was one point which interested him. One would naturally have supposed (so he reflected) that going out with *two* girls would be absolute insurance against any appearance that he was going with one. But it had, somehow, worked just the other way. The presence of the other girl had served to continually play up the fact that he was the property of one and not of the other. It was herself that had selected Madge; and Madge had known her part. In short, this mere country girl, with no tutor in love except that which presides over the destiny of a sparrow, had taken him for herself and encompassed him about with circumstance more effectively than could any city coquette, consciously working with more artificial aids and ampler means. Well then, as it had been so, and she had so easily fallen in love with him, she would as easily find another; and then she could proceed to forget him. It was apparent to him that, whatever his origin might be, he had inherited notions that were different from Lizzie's.

As thinking got him nowhere, he rose from his revery and decided to get ready for Sunday dinner. The whole fact of the matter (and this put an end to all reasoning) was that he was not in love with her. The sooner he put an end to his situation the better for all concerned. As it was his conscience continued to be haunted with a long accusing line of witnesses in the shape of thirty or forty glasses of milk.

After a long walk he took dinner at a restaurant on Madison street. And then, his intellect cleared with fresh air and his resolution fortified with coffee, he made straight for Mrs. Bradlaw's boarding house. Here he introduced himself as a friend of Mr. Vose's.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Bradlaw did not, at present, have any single rooms that were vacant. However, Mr. Mannigo, the plumber, was in need of a room-mate, and possibly such an arrangement would be agreeable. David looked at the room and allowed himself to be introduced to Mr. Mannigo, and after some hesitation he decided that the arrangement would do, at least temporarily.

When he got back to his rooming place he found that the Fates were propitious to moving. Lizzie had gone to make a call at the milk depot. Her aunt, upon being informed that he had decided to go to boarding and wished to take immediate advantage of an opportunity in that line, exhibited mild regrets—nothing more. To his surprise, she did not even inquire as to the details of his plans. She did not seem to think there was anything unusual in such sudden departure. He began to wonder whether she knew about all that milk.

Having this part so easily done, he went upstairs at once and set to work packing. Since leaving the army his personal belongings had not grown beyond the capacity of a large leather grip and a suit-case; but there was a collection of books which presented a problem under the particular circumstances. They ought to have been left for a second load; but having started to move in the absence of Lizzie he would prefer to make a clean job of it. It was better to be gone when she came back. He therefore bound them up with a strap and set forth. With a specious appearance of ease he managed to carry the difficult and awkward burden until he had put some distance behind him and turned a corner. There he set them down to give the problem

further consideration, hoping, at the same time, that Lizzie would not choose that route to come home. He was having enough trouble in running away from her without being bothered with problems of explanation.

He should have had a conveyance, but there was none to be seen in those parts, and the street cars did not cover his route. The suit-case and the grip he could easily have managed, but the library, being tall and unwieldy and bound to strike against his leg when he carried it in the same hand with the suit-case, made a distressing complication. He picked all up again, and after setting them down several times to take new holds, the books growing heavier and bumping him and pulling him awry, he saw that he would probably get them there by stages. Finally, after stumbling twice over his load of knowledge, he did get them to Mrs. Bradlaw's and up into the room. There he set them down with the feeling of an Atlas who has been too long carrying the world.

As he sat down in an aged and decrepit easy chair to recover from his forced march, he wondered what Lizzie would think when she came back home and found him gone. She would be surprised, no doubt. And disappointed. But she could be depended upon to find some other young man in the course of time—one who suited her and who was not engaged in trying to find his mother. She could easily find such a one; and his future would be more at her disposal.

Anyway, *his* problem was disposed of. He had escaped from that by-path in life. And so he ceased to think of Lizzie and took a new account of the room with its old walnut furniture and double bed.

On a small center-table was Mannigo's accordeon. It had a red bellows and was bound with brass at the corners. He wondered what sort of noise Mannigo made on it. And how often and at what hours he made it.

CHAPTER VII

At an early hour one Sunday morning, two girls sat on the steps of Mrs. Bradlaw's boarding house patiently waiting. They were sadly in need of sleep, but yet very much awake to everything that was going on about them. At present their attention, and especially that of Miss Shane, was turned in the direction of Vose, who was pacing methodically back and forth from end to end of the porch.

"Gee, I should think some day he would fall off of there. I hate to look at him come to the end of it," said Miss Dempsey.

"Oh, he knows how long it is; he's got it all in his head," replied Miss Shane—she of the red hair.

Although she hated to look at it, Miss Dempsey watched with interest every time he came to the north end. At that end the iron rail was missing, and he went so far before turning that he always seemed about to step off into the air. If he had done so he would have plunged down eight or ten feet, that being the height above the street level of Mrs. Bradlaw's main or "parlor" floor, which one reached by ascending the flight of stone steps.

"I don't see how he does it," continued Miss Dempsey.

"Oh, he counts and counts—same as he does with music. He knows everything that way."

A silence ensued during which Miss Shane seemed to be deeply engaged in thought. Presently she went on.

"I heard a piece once that I bet he woulda liked. You know it was the time they brought that dead soldier home to Oak Park and buried him. And Miss Bennett took me along to the funer'l. She knew some of his folks, and that's

how she come to work me in. Say, it was *grand*. All military. And they played Chaplin's Funer'l March."

Miss Dempsey paid little attention to this. She was engaged between whiles in watching the second story windows of the frame dwelling across the street, the shades of which were only half raised. She was thinking that the young man who roomed over there might be coming to the window at any moment and raising the curtain; in which case he would see her. And she might be able to exchange glances with him. He had recently left them and gone across the street for the sake of rooming "single." But as he still took meals at Mrs. Bradlaw's he had not broken allegiance with them altogether nor ceased to be counted as one of them.

To Miss Dempsey, whose place at table was only three chairs from his, he was somewhat of a problem. He seemed to enjoy spending part of his time "all by himself." He was different in that way, and also in other ways which she did not exactly comprehend; and she was inclined to resent his way of being except at times. Those were the times when he seemed to be paying *her* some attention. But it was a difficult point to determine, inasmuch as he was quite sociable with everybody. As for his leaving them and going across the street, he seemed to have nothing against Mannigo the plumber, for they were quite friendly. Possibly he did not like Mannigo's accordeon.

Miss Dempsey here let her gaze wander up to the third story of the stone front, where a raised window let out the Sunday morning squawk of the plumber's red bellows. But she soon returned her attention to the still unraised curtains across the street. She wished to be looked at.

Before her expectations could be fulfilled, Vose halted in the middle of his march and snapped open the lid of his watch. Laying two fingers methodically on the dial, from which the crystal had been removed, he stood quiet a mo-

ment, his smoked glasses gazing straight ahead, while he read the time.

"Well, girls," he called out, "it is time for us to be going. That is, if you still feel like taking me."

"Oh, sure," said Miss Shane, rising promptly. And then followed, in leisurely manner, the more statuesque Miss Dempsey. Whereupon Vose, proceeding with sure and even tread, came down the steps unaided and turned in the right direction.

"How'd I best take hold?" queried Miss Shane.

"Just take my arm," answered Vose, extending it in the proper way—as if it were he that was escorting the young ladies.

"Oh, sure," said Miss Shane. "I guess we'd look better that way than goin' along holdin' hands."

This sally of wit was followed by a titter from Miss Shane and was acceded to by a smile from Miss Dempsey. An amused and appreciative look passed over the countenance of Vose.

To Miss Dempsey's surprise he was not at all hard to lead. He struck right out with a firm and confident step and was not different to walk with from any other man. It was only necessary for her and Miss Shane to look out for street cars and automobiles and take the most unfrequented route.

The trio, now under full sail, formed a combination which, even to the most careless observer, must have called for a second look. Of the two girls, Miss Dempsey, who worked in the corset factory, was the supposedly handsome one; while Miss Shane, who was employed in the box factory, seemed to go about with her as an illustration of the very opposite qualities. Miss Dempsey, tall and well-formed and of whitish complexion, was studiously attired in black. Miss Shane, she of the red hair, was the more girlish of the two, and at the same time the more dowdyish. She was girlishly

freckled and short and indolently well fleshed. Her heavy red hair, which she wore in a loose roll, seemed always on the point of coming down; and there were many loose ends which she was too careless to tuck in. Her dress was an anomalous reddish brown, as if her taste in fabrics had been affected by the color of her hair; and as the color scheme was too indolent and lifeless to strike up either a contrast or a harmony, but only sameness, her whole being seemed to be of a rusty no-color. But she was easy-going, good natured and amiably comfortable; and, in her way, girlish.

The difference between this inseparable pair became most striking on Saturday nights when they sat in the balcony at the show. At such times Miss Dempsey sat circumspectly upright, watching the performance with seldom a glimmer of humor, and periodically opening her vanity case and touching up her complexion in a little round mirror —a ladylike rite which she quite frequently performed in public. Miss Shane, slouching down in the comfortable seat, bothered not about a vanity case, but reached down at regular intervals into her hand-bag and fed herself chocolates.

Miss Shane, with all her dowdy adolescence, had the saving grace of being quite unconscious of herself. She thought frequently of others. David Mann, who liked her better of the two, had several times speculated upon her future; and he had a complete picture in his mind of what Miss Shane would finally become. She would be contentedly married to someone like Mannigo the plumber; and she would have a large family of children, all happy and dirty. The back door of their cottage would look upon a muddy back yard; and the plumber's wife, still addicted to the same rusty colors, would sit in the sunny doorway and keep watch over a yardful of ducks. To David's mind, the ducks were inevitable. They fitted her and completed the picture. As some such comfortable and commonplace destiny seemed assured out of the elements of her character, David's solicitude regard-

ing her too easy-going and untrained girlhood was considerably ameliorated.

As for Miss Dempsey, imagination refused to say what might become of her. If, by some miracle, she could be cured of her ignorant faith in indirection and trickery, her utterly useless and imperfectly covered lies, something regular *might* become of her. But as this was unlikely, the future was an unwritten page with plenty of room for tragedy.

Miss Dempsey, along with her statuesque form, had features that were a close approach to the classical. But she had a scant upper lip which she sometimes screwed into such unseemly aspects, especially when she was eating, that it was quite disillusioning. It was the mark of her common clay; the lip was the tell-tale of her face; and when she spoke with an affected tendency to lisp—a mode of speech that was entirely out of harmony with her size and general make-up—it was as if the frog jumped out of her mouth and revealed the well of ignorance within.

Of this exterior contrast upon the part of his conductors, Vose knew nothing. They might have been twin Venuses to him. He knew by the contact of her shoulders that Miss Dempsey was the taller; and he knew by rumor that Miss Shane had red hair. The red hair always called up a vision of his red sled and became invested with pleasant associations. And to him, who was old enough to be their father, they were just girls, amusingly inexperienced and refreshing in their points of view. Besides which, they had several times offered, as on this Sunday morning, to help him; from which he knew that, whatever they might be otherwise, there still survived in them the womanly trait of kindness to the afflicted.

Vose seldom needed assistance. But this was a day when he did. His friend Corwin, the blind organist of St. Stephen's, had repeatedly invited him to attend mass as a friendly critic of his playing; and the two had arranged be-

tween them that this was to be the morning. Corwin was to do something special. But the newsboy whom Vose had engaged to take him proved delinquent; and as St. Stephen's lay in a quarter of the city with which he was not familiar, he seemed doomed to disappointment. In this juncture the girls offered their services; and it must be said that, as they had been up late in their regular Saturday night pursuit of pleasure, this was very kind of them.

Pictures will rise in the mind whether one has eyes or not; and Vose, never having run his skillful fingers over their features nor had a really adequate picture in words, had impressions of his own. To him, Miss Shane was very beautiful. At least, she was the better looking of the two. Possibly it was the soft indolence of her voice, her entire openness of nature, and her frank wonder regarding things of which she was ignorant, which operated to give him that impression. But more than all a certain motherly quality which made itself manifest in her nature.

As for Miss Dempsey, whose classic form and features he knew not, she was rather an abstraction. He knew that she was not quite genuine in her kind. And he had heard that she was handsome. But he sometimes caught inflections in the voice of Miss Shane which raised visions of a being who, in spite of ignorance and inexperience, was like Beauty itself. And who of us, by mere virtue of having eyes, will presume to say him nay?

In so far as he was merely a blind man the relations between Vose and the girls were quite intimate; but especially so between him and Miss Shane. She, by virtue of sitting at his left hand at table (the plumber being his right hand companion) had come to serve him in certain small but important capacities. She always saw that his knife and fork, his coffee and butter and side dishes were arranged before him in a set order. And then, by a little whispered conference, she would let him know what the several dishes con-

tained. Not until she had done this would he make any move toward eating; but when he did begin, the smoothness of his performance was a constant marvel to her. There was something in it of the dainty precision and fine stealth of a cat. First he would lay his hands lightly on the cloth before him, and by making a slight circuit with the ends of his fingers he would touch things into being. After that all was as easy to him as playing on the piano—than which nothing could be easier. Only occasionally would there be any fumbling—a small tentative touch of things—and this was so small and momentary as to be scarcely noticeable. One would have to look behind those dark glasses to be convinced that there were no eyes.

There were, however, occasional little mischances which, seldom observed by others, had their effect on Miss Shane, who was always watching him. He would, for instance, put his fork into his dish of fried potatoes and fail to get any; but he would convey the fork to his open mouth precisely as if the potatoes were there. It was only after his lips had closed on the fork and found it empty that he would be apprised of his failure.

To Jennie Shane this was always a tragedy. Whenever she saw him go through the form of eating those non-existent potatoes her countenance would drop and she would take on a most doleful expression. Her sympathies were deeply affected. And then, when he made a second or third trial and had success, she would be correspondingly gratified.

Jennie Shane had fallen into this position by a sort of natural selection—the survival of the homeliest. In the allotment of places at table (in which art no boarding house mistress was ever more astute than Mrs. Bradlaw) Miss Shane, ugly duckling, was put next to the blind man. She had to be placed somewhere. It was a fortunate chance for both of them. She filled an important position; and Vose, appreciative of her attentions to him, gave her an occasional

present—not forgetting, at the same time, to give something to her chum and room-mate, Miss Dempsey. It was in this way that the beautiful Miss Dempsey came into the fine little vanity case, so much more expensive than any she had ever had before; and Miss Shane had suggested giving it, insisting that *she* did not want anything for her services.

It was evident to Vose that Miss Shane's attentions to him were quite unmercenary; it was, indeed, all too spontaneous and warm-hearted and womanly to be a mere boughten service. And as for Miss Dempsey, while she sometimes profited more than her companion, it was always on Jennie's insistence that she did so, not through any preference of Vose's. So that, so far as Vose was merely a blind man, one of the afflicted, the relations between him and the girls were quite simple and unaffected. But in the regard that he was a man of education and refinement and superior parts, there was necessarily a chasm between them; though he never seemed to be so conscious of this fact as they did. More frequently the girls tried to talk up to him than he tried to talk down to them; and this was the case as they now pursued their way to St. Stephen's.

"Oh, Mr. Vose," said Miss Shane, "it must be wonderful to know all about high-class music like you do. About all I know is two-steps and fox-trots and jazz. I don't suppose you care much for jazz?"

"Well, I don't know," said Vose, mildly. "We used to play a certain amount of popular music when I was with the trio. They were mostly old-fashioned numbers, and I don't suppose they were very highly rated in their day. Any class of music might have a stroke of genius in it. It all depends."

"And whine music! I have a friend who has a phonograph and they have some perfectly lovely pieces. Do you like whine music, Mr. Vose?"

"What kind?" queried Vose.

"Whine music. The kind they play in Honolulu."

"Oh! Hawaiian. Yes, it's good enough in its way."

Vose did not smile. He never laughed at Miss Shane. The blank look that usually sits on a blind man's face seldom had a place on his; but when he wished to put it there he could look as vacuous as any of them.

"Just think, Maggie," said Miss Shane, "of him and two other blind men going all over the United States together and seeing everything. No, I don't mean seeing anything, but being in all the different cities. I don't see how you could do it, Mr. Vose."

"We could do that easily enough," replied Vose. "And we had a very good time, too. Isn't this a rather low quarter of the city we are going through?"

This query startled the two girls. They had, in their choice of unpopulous streets—partly with the idea of avoiding traffic at the crossings and partly because their three-abreast formation made them prefer a clear sidewalk—turned unwittingly into a little tag end of a street which was very disreputable. And now they were hurrying through with the idea that he would know nothing about it. While it flaunted its vice visually on every hand, there was nothing, so far as they were aware, to give notice to a blind man. Vose seemed to know everything.

"Yes, it is a kind of a low place," said Miss Shane. "We turn at the next corner."

Until they reached the corner nothing more was said. Then a spire came into view, and the bells of St. Stephen's, booming in the distance, warned them that the time was short.

Arrived at the church, Miss Dempsey was half inclined to go in; but Jennie, lured by the lazy warmth of the sun and the springtime invitation to adventure, easily prevailed with her suggestion—"Oh, let's take a walk."

"And remember, Mr. Vose," said Miss Dempsey as they

parted at the entrance, "you gotta play for us this afternoon."

"Very well," said Vose.

"And sing, too," added Miss Shane. "You gotta sing *Lorena*—right after dinner."

"All right. I will," said Vose. And then made his way, quite as surely as if he had eyes, into the church, already thundering with the diapason of Corwin's organ.

The Sunday stroll started off very auspiciously with the discovery of some chocolates in Miss Shane's handbag. There were two of them which had somehow escaped her during the evening at the show.

"I guess they must a-fell outa the paper bag," she remarked, placing one in her mouth and handing the other to her companion. "They taste good now. I wish I hadn't a-ate 'em all."

During the space of an hour the girls strolled about, enjoying their Sunday freedom and rehearsing affairs of the week. They spoke about matters at the corset factory and the box factory; reviewed the latest antics of Miss Ramsay the milliner—"and isn't the way an old thing like her makes goo-goo eyes at Mr. Llewellyn just awful"—; mentioned the real smart boarder, McCurdy the sewing machine man, and his ventriloquism; and dwelt at much length upon that good, reliable boarder, Mannigo, the plumber, wondering whether he would get tickets to the show again, and if so, whether he would take them *both*. And finally, after much of like consequence, they were back at the church just as the worshippers came forth, where they sought out their blind man and took him in tow.

Vose had not wanted them to wait for him, for he felt confident that, by taking a street car into territory he was familiar with, he would be able to make his way back. He was very self-reliant in this regard. But the girls refused to take such chances with him.

"I am sorry, girls, that I had to bother you so much—especially when you were so sleepy." This from Vose as they parted with him in the hallway of Mrs. Bradlaw's.

"Oh, I am not sleepy now," said Miss Dempsey. "I'm only sleepy in the mornings. At this time of day I always get all woke up."

"And remember," said Miss Shane, "that after dinner you promised to play and sing for us in the parlor. You gotta sing *Lorena*."

"Very well," said Vose.

CHAPTER VIII

Sunday dinner at Mrs. Bradlaw's family boarding house, following a custom handed down from the days when the American family went to church, was an event scheduled for one o'clock. Although there were no families in the boarding house, except the one large family to which anybody could belong, and though few of this family ever went to church, the old respectable hour still held sway. It was, to tell the truth, a religious custom which owed its survival to the fact that so many members stayed out late Saturday night and consequently slept late Sunday morning.

About two o'clock, therefore, in the inactive period between dinner and afternoon engagements, they were all assembled in the parlor to listen to the romantic song and story of Lorena—McCurdy the sewing machine agent (secretly hoping that he would be called upon to get out his puppets and give an exhibition of his skill in ventriloquism), Mannigo the plumber (thinking possibly he could play the tune on his accordeon), Llewellyn the floor-walker (to whom the milliner, rolling her eyes soulfully, had already confided that it was a most affecting love story), and last, but not least, the substantial form of Bradlaw himself. Mrs. Bradlaw, knowing that it was a tale of disappointed love, and having an eye for effect, placed herself beside Mr. Bradlaw on the sofa and reclined against him in such a way as to form a picture of the happily married couple.

"But where is Mr. Mann?" inquired Miss Dempsey. "I thought *he* was coming. Oh, here he is."

As she spoke David came in through the door from the hallway and completed the audience. Miss Dempsey, who

was sitting exactly in the middle of a little settee, moved over and made room for him. But David, ignoring the reserved seat, drew up a chair and sat down behind Miss Shane.

Vose, already at the piano, had been lightly musing on the keyboard, running from theme to theme. As David arrived he stopped.

"Well, Miss Shane," he inquired, "shall we have the song first and explanations afterward? Or do you want first the story and then the song?"

"Oh, tell the story first," said Miss Shane. "I think it's lots nicer that way. Then everybody knows what it's about."

"Very well. Just as you say. I used to include a few verses in the story in order to illustrate it and carry it along. It is part of an entertainment we used to give, entitled, Famous Songs—an Evening of Song and Story."

He turned about on the stool so that he sat facing his audience; and then, with a readiness of phrase which showed that he had learned it as a lecture, and had forgotten nothing of his part with the blind men's trio, he told the following tale:

"In the city of Zanesville, Ohio, there lived, some years before the Civil War, a young Universalist minister, the Rev. Henry de Lafayette Webster. He was educated in the Columbian Academical and Collegiate Institute, and was the editor of the college paper. In the year 1848, being then twenty-four years of age, and full of poetry and romance, he was enjoying his first pastorate in Zanesville.

"His leading parishioner was a wealthy manufacturer whose residence was upon one of the many hills which surround that picturesque city, and the eminence upon which it was seated was the one referred to in the song:

'T was flowery May
When up the hilly slope we climbed
To watch the dying of the day
And hear the distant church bells chimed.

"There lived in the manufacturer's family a younger sister of his wife, an orphan who was the leading singer in the choir. She was nineteen years old, small of stature with blue eyes, light brown hair and exquisite complexion. She was not only a sweet singer but was as full of poetry and romance as her pastor, and they became strongly attached to one another.

"Their loving, however, did not prosper well. The manufacturer's family was wealthy and aristocratic and had higher notions of the young lady's future than to sanction her marriage with a poor preacher. As she was dependent upon them for a home, and was of an obedient, compliant nature, she listened to the repeated insistence of her proud sister and wealthy brother-in-law, and, after a long struggle and many bitter tears, she yielded to their counsel; and the parting of the ways came. The young minister saw her for the last time at her home, learned of the sister's unconquerable objection, and heard his fate; and then came a quiet but painful farewell. That night she wrote him a letter in which she used the words so well remembered by those familiar with the song, 'If we try we may forget.'

"The separation was a withering blow to those young, loving hearts. Mr. Webster, in writing to a friend twenty-six years after the parting, said, 'I doubt if all the dark lines are erased from my heart yet.' He resigned his pastorate and sought other fields, smothering his pain as best he could by filling his place well in life. He remained in the ministry to the end of his days, and the only sign of that pain the world ever saw was the heart cry in the much-loved song *Lorena*.

"In 1856 he was residing in an Illinois city where he met J. R. Webster, the composer, who, although of the same name, was not a relative. J. R. Webster was writing some music and was at a loss to find appropriate words. The Rev. Mr. Webster told him he could write a song, and

in a day or two produced it, entitled 'Bertha,' a mere fanciful name. When the composer came to set the song to music he found he wanted a name of three syllables, accented on the second, and the author then supplied the name Lorena. The young lady's name was not Lorena, however. It was Ella.

"The song, when published, had a success rarely attained by popular melodies, and its popularity, beginning in 1858, lasted for years. It was sung everywhere—in the parlor, in concerts, on the street and in the camps of contending armies. It was remarkable in the fact that it was the popular song of both the North and South in the bitter days of the Civil War. In the northern army it was immensely popular, and found its way south through Louisville and Cincinnati; and during the Rebellion it was, almost, the only piece sung in southern homes, and, excepting martial airs, about the only one sung in Confederate camps. Everywhere was *Lorena*. A steamer on the Ohio was named Lorena; engines on the western roads were called Lorena; and, in the years following the war, persons often met young and middle-aged ladies called Lorena.

"The music had a peculiar charm and the words were singularly touching; and the length of the song, extending to six long verses, suggested that there was a story back of it. That the story was founded on truth, everyone familiar with it could not help thinking; and they thought correctly. But those who sang it did not know the story of disappointed love of which it was born. The young minister had disguised it behind the name Lorena, and when it became public property in this poetical form, he took no steps to make the facts known. So strong was the feeling, however, that it was founded on life that various stories of its origin sprang into being. A story which became prevalent in the South was that it was the love story of a Trappist monk belonging to the brotherhood in Kentucky.

"The Rev. H. D. L. Webster died here in Chicago on November 3, 1896."

Vose here turned about, facing his instrument, and after a preliminary fingering of the keyboard, as if he were awakening the chords, he turned his blind eyes upward and began to sing:

The years creep slowly by, Lorena,
The snow is on the grass again;
The sun's low down the sky, Lorena,
The frost gleams where the flowers have been;
But the heart beats on as warmly now
As when the summer days were nigh;
Oh! the sun can never dip so low
Adown affection's cloudless sky.

A hundred months have passed, Lorena,
Since last I held thy hand in mine,
And felt thy pulse beat fast, Lorena,
Though mine beat faster far than thine;—
A hundred months!—'T was flowery May
When up the hilly slope we climbed
To watch the dying of the day
And hear the distant church bells chimed!

We loved each other then, Lorena,
More than we ever dared to tell;
And what we might have been, Lorena,
Had but our loving prospered well!
But then, 't is past, the years are gone;
I'll not call up their shadowy forms;
I'll say to them, "Lost years, sleep on!
Sleep on! Nor heed life's pelting storms."

The story of the past, Lorena,
Alas! I care not to repeat;
The hopes that could not last, Lorena,
They lived, but only lived to cheat.
I would not cause e'en one regret
To rankle in your bosom now;
For, "if we try we may forget"
Were words of thine long years ago.

Yes, those words were thine, Lorena;
They burn within my memory yet.
They touch some tender chords, Lorena,
Which thrill and tremble with regret.

'T was not thy woman's heart that spoke—
Thy heart was always true to me.
A duty stern and pressing broke
The tie that linked my soul with thee.

It matters little now, Lorena,
The past is in th' eternal past.
Our heads will soon lie low, Lorena;
Life's tide is ebbing out so fast.
There is a future; O, thank God,
Of life this is so small a part!
'Tis dust to dust beneath the sod,
But There—up There—'t is heart to heart!

As Vose sang that line, "But there—up There—'Tis heart to heart," his countenance turned upward and seemed to dwell upon a celestial vision; and thus the last few notes of the accompaniment faded into nothingness. To Jennie Shane, rapt in his every word and move, those sightless eyes seemed to be gazing straight into Heaven.

A silence settled over the company as he took his hands from the keyboard and turned about on the stool. Then came a patter of applause followed by more silence, which gradually gave way to whispered comment and exclamations of approval. Mrs. Bradlaw was sitting closer than ever to her very substantial husband; Miss Dempsey, alone on the end of her settee, cast a glance in the direction of David—without, however, catching his eye; and Llewellyn the floor-walker seemed to be looking with distinct approval upon the form of the little milliner. But Miss Shane, with her rusty-brown garb and nondescript hair, did not partake of this interchange of glances. Her attention was fastened wholly, in mute wonder, upon her blind man.

Then Llewellyn spoke—

"That was a very beautiful song, Mr. Vose. And an interesting story. I was particularly interested to learn that the author of the song died here in Chicago. That brings the romance quite near home."

"Yes," replied Vose, "he died here, as I said, on November 3, 1896. He lived to the age of seventy-two."

"But what," inquired Jennie Shane, suddenly finding voice, "—what became of Lorena?"

Vose turned his head in her direction and paused before replying. And then, with that air of finer seriousness which he always manifested toward Miss Shane, he replied—

"Well, my girl, Lorena went blind. She lost her eyesight and was totally blind for years. Possibly that is one reason I have been so interested in her story. She died at Marietta, Ohio, just two years ago—March 3, 1917."

"Well! Indeed!" exclaimed Llewellyn. "And the author died here in Chicago! That brings the song quite near home to us in time as well as place. And she was blind, too!"

"Yes," mused Vose. "The old romance, beginning in 1856, has quite recently had the curtain rung down on it."

"But," said Jennie Shane, still regarding Vose with that faithful fixedness of gaze which she always bestowed on anyone who interested her, "don't you suppose she ever thought of him afterwards? And maybe felt sorry?"

"Probably," said Vose. "She married a man who became a distinguished member of the supreme court of Ohio. But he died and she outlived him many years. It was then she went blind."

"Then," commented Jennie, "I should think she would just *have* to think. I don't see how she could help thinking about all that—and her old and blind."

"No doubt," said Vose. "A person who goes blind always looks back upon the scenes of the past with new interest and affection. Old age, too, always turns back to the scenes of youth. The young minister had made her girlhood famous—though few outside her own immediate acquaintances ever knew who Lorena was. And he was true to her to the end of his days."

"Well," said Jennie very positively—her whole mind now

intent upon her blind man—"I should think she *would* a-felt sorry. And she aught to a-took him no matter *what* her sister said. *I* would a-took him."

At this a titter went round the room.

Jennie Shane, so single-minded in nature, and so utterly absorbed in the love story, had become quite oblivious of her surroundings; and consequently unmindful of the proprieties that hedge about a young lady. When the titter went round the room, she looked about her in confusion and blushed. And not knowing how otherwise to retrieve her modesty, she drew in her feet and pushed her skirts farther down toward her ankles.

The spell of romance being broken by this touch of comedy, the inmates of Mrs. Bradlaw's boarding house put on their company manners; and having conversed a while upon more prosaic topics they began drifting away to afternoon engagements. To everybody's surprise, Llewellyn the floor-walker paid marked attention to the milliner and ended by taking her to the show.

David Mann, during Vose's rendition of the song and story, remained silent behind Miss Shane. He wondered at the blind man's skill at the piano, and still more at the refinement of his singing and certain unconscious dramatic art by which he invested the words with life and feeling. When the break came in the musical spell, and the simple Miss Shane was covered with confusion by her artless honesty, he rose from his chair and disappeared, making no excuses for his sudden departure. He took his hat off the rack and proceeded directly to his room across the street.

CHAPTER IX

In the afternoon Vose took a long walk by a route which he had memorized and become accustomed to. It was a route he reserved for Sunday uses, it being then quite free from traffic at the crossings. In the course of it he fell in with an acquaintance who invited him to supper. When he got back to the boarding house it was nearly sundown; and after standing in the parlor long enough to find that it afforded no company, he went up to his room.

He had hardly put away his things and found occupation for himself, running his fingers along the letters of a new book he was reading, when Mrs. Bradlaw knocked and came in.

"Mr. Mann has been looking for you," she announced. "He inquired for you three or four times this afternoon. I guess he wants to see you about something important."

"Then I guess I had better go over to his room."

"No, you don't need to do that. You had better stay here. He said for me to tell you he was coming back."

Mrs. Bradlaw, finding herself talking in total darkness, the curtains having been pulled down to keep out the heat of the afternoon, went to one of them and put it up. This brought her boarder into view, throwing a band of sunset athwart his lap.

"There; that's better," she said. "I always like to see to talk. Have you any matches?"

"Yes. I always carry matches."

And being thus reminded, he filled his pipe, struck a light and began to smoke.

"Then you will be able to light the gas when he comes

I thought you might want a light. Do you suppose it is something important?"

"I couldn't say," replied Vose.

As he offered nothing further, Mrs. Bradlaw took her departure. When she had gone he closed the book he had been reading and laid it on the bed. And then, with the pipe comfortably going, he settled down to wait.

In a little while David came up the stairs. Hardly waiting for his knock to be answered he opened the door and came in.

"Here you are!" he exclaimed. "Well, Vose, I guess you did it."

"Did what?"

"Reminded me of something. I remember when I started to learn the alphabet. It came to me this afternoon—suddenly. I learned Z first. And then N. I learned Z and N together. And I got them mixed up. I learned them off the cast iron apron of a cook-stove. There was a word that began with Z. And a little farther along was N. And when I stood at the side of the stove instead of the front the N was Z and the Z was N. And that's what got me mixed up—made me answer wrong. It came to me all of a sudden—in a sort of dream. Just that moment."

"Zanesville?" queried Vose, his brow rising as if with mental light.

"No. I am saying just what I remember. Your talking so much about Zanesville was what did it—brought that Z back. There was a girl or woman—I don't know which—pointing to a letter with a poker. On the apron of a cook-stove. I knew Z when I saw it. I had learned that. She pointed to a letter and asked what it was; and I said Z. And she said I was *wrong*. It was N. That puzzled me. I remember just that moment."

"Yes—just that moment," commented Vose. "That's the way."

"I remember the *puzzling experience,*" continued David. "Z was N. I can remember that I was standing at the side of the stove; I can see things just as they were at that moment. And I suppose I didn't have sense enough to know my being at the side of the stove was what made the difference. But I knew Z; and when she said I was wrong I was completely puzzled. I almost feel puzzled now when I think of it."

"And what else?" queried Vose.

"Nothing else. That's all."

"Why don't you try Zanesville?"

"Well, that's what *I* thought at first. I was rather excited about it. I almost imagined I *did* come from Zanesville. And then I saw it was no clue. *If* that word was the name of a city, it might have been Zenith City or Zion or something else with a Z and an N as well as Zanesville."

"But the word *began* with Z, didn't you say?"

"Yes. It was the first letter in the word."

"Well, that's a good clue. Few names of cities begin with Z; and in fact few words do. Very few in the language. If you were looking for a letter for a clue you couldn't get anything better than Z."

"Yes, I thought of that. But I don't know that it was the name of a city. It might have been just a word—or the name of the stove. And besides, if that stove *did* come from Zanesville it's no sign that I came from there. Stoves go all over. But at first I was rather excited about it. That love story of yours stirred the thing up from somewhere in my mind—got me to going. And now when I think of the apron of that stove it seems to be connected with the story of Lorena. The atmosphere is the same—one seems as romantic as the other. You got my imagination to going."

With this rather formidable array of unpromising facts, there fell a silence. It continued for a long while. The fanlike wrinkles radiating outward from the ends of Vose's

spectacles—little sunbursts of thought which depicted themselves on his temples when he was engaged upon a problem—indicated to David that he might be looking into the matter in some way of his own. And being at the end of his own wits, he awaited the results of Vose's thought without interrupting him.

Vose had once told him, much to his surprise, that the blind had long been noted for the fact that there were more skeptics among them than among any other class. He also told him (though Vose did not agree with this view) that some theorists were of the opinion that it was all due to intellectual vanity, the blind man's desire to be wondered at; and that the same trait caused blind people to take pride in their power in controversy. Vose had spoken of this lightly and with a certain philosophic forbearance which characterized him; but nevertheless he disagreed. He pointed out that, as a blind man is shut up within himself, and is engaged for a large part of his time upon inward things, he naturally becomes a thinker. And being a thinker he necessarily disagrees with the views of many people. Besides which, a blind man, being confined to a few important books in raised letters, naturally takes pleasure in talking with his fellows; and as he is not very well informed in mere gossip, he learns to talk upon *subjects*. The very nature of his ailment makes him a thinker.

Once David had this view, it shed a light upon Vose's own remarkable abilities and his apparent contentment with his lot in life. Certainly he took a pride—a most commendable pride—in being an expert blind man. He regarded it as an art, a trade, a profession in itself. And no doubt he took much quiet satisfaction in the wonderment of those who could not understand his skill in the dark. It was not only commendable, it was admirable; for how could a man, unless he had some pride—a little excusable vanity—ever learn to take a piano apart and keep track of a multiplicity of

tools and exercise all the reasoning power and fine art of detection necessary to locate the flaw in a sound-board or an action? So thought David; and he agreed with Vose that those who accounted for skepticism among the blind merely upon the score of vanity were folk who met an embarrassing fact in a rather uncharitable way.

Vose was a thinker. He was somewhat limited in the raw material of thought, but he made good use of what he had. In his problems of getting about in the world, he observed details which others would never think of noting. Every step of his progress through life was accompanied by close thinking *as well* as observation, and the devising of methods of overcoming difficulties that were shrewd and original. And he could not afford to make mistakes or indulge in false steps. Having this view of him, David always awaited his judgments with live interest.

Presently Vose spoke.

"I think that that word beginning with Z was very likely the name of the place where you were born."

"You do? Why?"

"Well, it isn't natural to start a child to learning the alphabet on Z. A cook or a kitchen girl—the woman with the poker—would hardly be likely to do it; she would do things in the regular way and start on the other end."

"But that was the first letter in the word."

"Yes, I know that. But a cook-stove has more than one word on it; there are usually words all over it. I have read the raised letters on a good many stoves and I know that. She picked out that word for you to study on in spite of the fact that it did not begin with A. There was probably some reason for the preference. It was more important than the other words in some way. And it is quite likely that it was the name of the town where you were born or where you were living."

"Yes?" queried David.

"If I were you I would start right to work on Zenith City and Zion and Zanesville or anything I could think of. But start first on Zanesville. And I have a good idea."

"What's that?"

"Hang around the hotels of evenings and Saturday afternoons and watch the hotel registers. Pretty soon you will meet a man from Zanesville. It will be more satisfactory than writing letters all over—especially to someone you haven't got interested. And there is no use spending money and time going to a place when the place is always coming to Chicago. You can start looking into it right here. And you won't have to travel at all—at least till you have got some clue."

"Good!" exclaimed David, slapping his knee. "Good idea. If I ever need a guide, Vose, I am going to hire a blind man."

"Now," continued Vose, "if there was ever a child that was abducted, or that mysteriously disappeared from that city, one of those prominent citizens—the kind that register at the large hotels—would be likely to know about it. And you can talk it all out and come to some conclusion right there."

"That is," put in David, as a shade of disappointment crossed his face, "*providing* I was abducted or mysteriously disappeared. And the disappearance created a sensation. But a child's parents may have died; and he may have become separated from them in some ordinary way. And it might have occurred in some other city."

"Well, you've got to take the chances," said Vose. "One step at a time. That Z is good stuff. You'll get there. And in the meantime I'll keep thinking it over."

As he seemed to be thinking it over immediately, David awaited results.

"Can't you possibly remember that it was Zanesville?" asked Vose, his thinking evidently having come to nothing.

"No. All I know is that that song and story of yours affected me. I went across the street and lay down on the bed, thinking it over. And then that Z on the apron of the stove popped into my head—or rather it stole into my imagination and took its place there. And all the time I was thinking of Zanesville and Lorena. That's all I know. It wasn't like remembering at all; it was sort of dreamy and romantic. And pleasant—and a long time ago. But I don't know any more about myself than I do about—Lorena. But I imagined it was the same place. Zanesville, when I say it, sounds sort of welcome to me. And natural."

"You've got the facts mixed up with the romance," said Vose. "But that's natural. Childhood memories are of the same pleasant nature—a sort of romance and poetry when we recall them. But I think you had better try Zanesville first."

"I'm going to. I'll haunt the hotels."

The talk now drifted into a rambling consideration of what the chances might be, all things considered; and when David rose to go, Vose was quite firmly of the opinion that something might come of it. "That Z means something," he insisted.

David rose and cast about for his hat. But the hat refused to be found. He had forgotten where he put it. And as the sun was long down, and the room was quite dark notwithstanding the raised curtain, his search for it met all sorts of obstacles. Finally, when he had stumbled into a chair and knocked it noisily against the bed, he lit a match and found it.

"Have you got it?" inquired Vose.

"Yes. It's on my head now."

"That's too bad. I forgot it was dark. I should have lit the gas."

"I should have remembered where I put it. Good night."

CHAPTER X

"Ha! The Man from Zanesville!" said the clerk at the Great Northern, swinging the register into position and offering the pen.

"Yes, sir," said the new arrival, beaming broadly. "Right back on my native soil again."

So saying, he grasped the pen and inscribed, in large, self-assertive script, which seemed to flow from him in a size proportioned to his own dimensions, *"J. Dugan Quigley, Omaha."*

"Yes, sir," he continued, turning sideways to the clerk's counter in order to take an inclusive view of the ornately tiled lobby, and stamping his foot on it as if to demonstrate the solid fact, "Right back on my native soil again. As I tell them wherever I go, there are few people in the United States who haven't stood on my native soil."

"And they still admire it as much as ever," answered the clerk, evidently pleased. "Here boy, take that grip and show Mr. Quigley up to his room."

Almost immediately Mr. Quigley followed his valise away to the elevator; and as he did so David Mann stepped out from his position near the end of the desk and made a mental photograph of the large, circumambient form of J. Dugan Quigley. He felt that he would know Mr. Quigley when he saw him again. There was little chance of mistaking him even from the rear—the western amplitude of fedora hat, the large expanse of clothes of a light wool mixture, and even the solid commodious last of the shoes in which he stood. But, in order to avoid any confusion due to a change of clothes, David took quiet note of the ample and expressive features of his man.

When the door of the elevator closed behind him and Mr. Quigley shot upward, David returned to the register and took a look at what had been written there. "Omaha," it said. This put him in a quandary. Here was a man who registered from Omaha, who claimed Chicago as his native soil and yet hailed distinctively from Zanesville. A complicate and puzzling sort of allegiance! However, let the explanation be what it might, David felt that he had found his man. Mr. Quigley was evidently a genial and communicative sort. He was plainly a man of affairs—one who would naturally be well posted on the doings of any community he had ever been identified with. A very human sort of person. And as he took so much pride in being known as the Man from Zanesville, he would most likely be full of information about that place. So thinking, David found a chair which commanded a view of the lobby and sat down to await his opportunity.

When Mr. Quigley made his reappearance he had changed in no particular except for the addition of a prosperous-looking Londres cigar and a small dark-haired, fidgety man who seemed to be a mere appendage to him. The two seemed to be interested in foundries, for they came to a halt near David and began to exchange views upon accidents in the industry. From this they drifted to molding sand; whereupon Mr. Quigley ran off the subject and began to talk brick and clay products. Here the terms became very dark—plain and ornamental vitreous—semi-vitreous—art mosaic—shale deposits—flint and hydraulic pavers. And all this was somehow connected with qualities of coal, coking and non-coking. Presently the little man—who seemed to be "talking up" to Mr. Quigley, and bore somehow the stamp of an underling—showed signs of getting beyond his depth, became restless and found occasion to leave.

Mr. Quigley, left alone, drifted in the direction of a comfortable seat and took one not far from David. Evidently

he was a man who had time at his disposal. And being pleasantly lulled by the rustle of newspapers and the hum of conversation, he settled down in his roundabout chair and wove his fingers together with the air of a man who knows how to enjoy a good cigar.

"Excuse me," said David, "I believe I heard the clerk address you as the Man from Zanesville."

"Yes. That's me," said Quigley.

"Referring to the fact that you represent a firm there?"

"No, sir. I was *born* in Zanesville. I'm located in Omaha. Represent myself."

"I rather got the impression that you were born here in Chicago. That is, you said you were glad to get back on your native soil again."

"Oh that!" said Quigley. "I was referring to this tiled floor. That's my native soil in this tile. So I naturally feel at home on it. Zanesville is the Clay City, you know. It's where the ornamental tile comes from. And the fine mosaic work."

"I see. And you were saying that nearly everybody in the United States has stood on your native soil. Isn't that a little—inclusive?"

"No, sir. Anybody who has been in a tiled bath-room, or the entrance to a fine public building, or a high-class bar-room or restaurant has most likely stood on Zanesville soil. And I guess there are few that haven't. Why, I was down in Mexico some years ago and I walked miles on my native soil. Every brick in the road was stamped Zanesville. At Milwaukee I put up at the principal club and it was built of our brick. So you see if you were born in Zanesville you can feel at home most anywhere. It's no exaggeration."

"I see the point," said David. "And that's why the clerk calls you the Man from Zanesville. He connects you up with this fine floor here in the lobby."

"Partly. But they are likely to call any of us that. It's

a sort of joke. A man from the Muskingum valley is usually well known. He likes to talk about the place. He has it in his system."

"He is patriotic," observed David.

"Yes, naturally. Besides that it is a very beautiful country. There's a charm in it. And the soil produces anything."

"Fertile?"

"Yes—so far as that goes. But you don't necessarily have to grow anything on it. You just dig it up and use it."

"I imagine that country would just suit a boy," said David. "A good place to be born in."

"There you're *right,*" said Quigley emphatically. "It's a clay country. And mud is the best toy invented yet."

"I don't wonder that you feel at home on a tile floor, Mr. Quigley."

"It's my native soil," said Quigley. "And the work in some of these floors is well worth looking at."

Here, thought David, was a man with imagination; and a passionate fondness for the place of his birth. The scenes of his youth had become translated into a sort of poetry. And with this thought David decided to come at once to his own peculiar problem.

"Mr. Quigley," he said, "I have been engaging you in conversation with the idea of finding out something about Zanesville. I imagine you are pretty well acquainted with the history of the place. Do you happen to know whether, about twenty years ago, a child was lost or stolen from Zanesville?"

Mr. Quigley thought a moment.

"Oh! You mean the Orr boy. Alida Watson's child. She was one of the Watson girls; and she married an Orr. Yes, that was about twenty years ago. But he didn't disappear from Zanesville exactly. He was lost in Texas."

"In Texas? Tell me about it."

"Well there isn't much to tell. The Orrs went down to Texas on a visit and the boy was lost or stolen. He disappeared in some way. And they never found him."

"Is this Mrs. Orr living yet?"

"Yes. Oh yes."

David Mann had a tense grip on the arm of his chair. He had not expected to arrive at results so easily, so quickly. And the whole answer, coming forth bodily, hit his mind with an impact that momentarily stopped him. He hardly believed it. Then he slapped his hand on the arm of the chair and jumped up so that the Man from Zanesville could look him over.

"Mr. Quigley," he said, "do I look like a Watson? Or an Orr?"

J. Dugan Quigley, large, healthy and mentally well ballasted, was not one to be easily surprised; but there was something about the young man's demeanor, and especially the look in his eye, which caused him to suddenly sit up straighter in his chair.

He looked David over a while and answered, "No, I can't say that you do. Are you a relative?"

David's countenance fell. This was disappointing. And then, realizing that Mr. Quigley had not been given an inkling of what the inquiry was about, he got himself in hand again and sat down to give an orderly explanation. He told it all, from the momentous arrival of that yearning for his mother in the hospital to this present instant.

J. Dugan Quigley, while he was outwardly imperturbable, and never, in any case, given to wearing his heart on his sleeve, had plenty of room in that large frame of his for his own private store of emotion. And though he might seem to be all solid business and material well-being, there was, under the various stratifications of his nature, a deep vein of poetic sentiment. Like his native country, his surface indications were mere clay; but underneath were the coal

measures. Consequently, as the young man's story was unfolded, and the hospital experience came forth, his whole nature began to warm up like a big boiler getting up steam. And when the significance of these details suddenly made itself apparent, it was his turn to be taken aback.

"Well!" he exclaimed. "A strange thing to happen! You'll have to go down there and make yourself known."

"But you say I don't look like a Watson or an Orr? Do you see any likeness now?"

"No—I can't say that I do."

"Then that doesn't look promising."

"Oh my boy, that means nothing. Look at me. My mother was a little woman hardly five feet tall, and very slight. Look at me. My father wasn't a big man either. If I had been lost and come back after twenty years and said 'Mother, here's your child,' she would have said 'You get out of here.' A man may take after his great-great-uncle; or he may be a mixture of people. The thing for you to do is to go and find out."

Mr. Quigley drew forth a B. & O. railway folder and placed a pencil directly on Zanesville.

"Right there is where you want to go," he said. "Now, when you get there you will see something you never saw before. You will see the Y bridge. I was raised near that bridge. It is a famous old landmark of the National road; and it crosses two rivers at once. It's the only one of its kind in the country. And then you want to be sure and go up on top of Putnam hill and take a look around. If you've ever been there before you'll know it; that bridge and that hill will certainly bring things back to you. And anyway it's worth while going there just to see that place. You'll like it. Any boy would like Zanesville."

"And ought to remember it," mused David.

"Yes. Providing he was old enough to get around and

do things. As I was saying, that's a clay country. A boy there has the same kind of mud that sculptors use; it's to be had all around for the taking. When I was a boy I used to roll out my own marbles and get them to put them in the kiln for me. And while the marbles were firing I used to hang around and watch the potter turning out crocks and jugs. Did you ever see a potter whirling a gob of clay on his wheel and pulling it right up into a jug?"

"No. Not that I remember," said David.

"Well, when you get down that way you want to go around to the potteries. Hunt up some old potter and see him making jugs. There's quick creative work for you. Sculpture while you wait. When I left there, as a boy, most of the potteries were confined to common utility ware. The bricks were made in wooden molds, by hand, and the surplus smoothed off with a bow-string, the same as in Egypt. But now they have gone into art potteries. And they make encaustic tile for ornamental floors. It's the greatest place of its kind in the country. And there's the river, too; and the scenery."

"I shall get about and see all that," said David.

"And here," continued Quigley, taking a leaf from his memorandum book and writing on it. "Take this. That's an address. Go and see Mr. Tyler. He was the executor of the Orr estate. He knows all about the family. Tell him I sent you—Jimmie Quigley. J. Dugan Quigley. If you're an Orr he'll get some way of finding it out. You had better go and see him first."

Here Mr. Quigley went back to the Muskingum scenery; and being once again on his favorite topic, he descanted upon the country till David, who was impatient to get to Zanesville, arose to take his leave.

"I am a thousand times obliged to you, Mr. Quigley. You were just the man I was looking for. If I have success I shall let you know."

And that very evening, having made arrangements for a leave of absence by telephone, he went across the street to say good-bye to Vose.

"I am going to find my mother," he said.

BOOK THE FOURTH

BOOK THE FOURTH

CHAPTER I

So this was the Muskingum valley!

As David, in the mingled breezes of an August morning, trudged along toward the town of Abram, he kept searching his mind for the answer to a question that was momentarily growing more difficult. The question had been waiting for an answer ever since he started out from Zanesville.

"What shall I say?"

What should he say to the Woman—to Mrs. Orr—to her who might be his mother? But this latter was a question that was yet to be determined. What should he say to Her?

The question had first become pressing when he was about to hire a cab in Zanesville. It occurred to him that he would have to tell the driver just where he wanted to be set down. He would be driven right up to her place; and then, having been formally delivered at the gate, nothing would remain but for him to go in. And being in, he would have to know how to meet her, how to broach that momentous question and just what light to put it in. After all it was a most delicate piece of business; and he could not venture into a cab until he had fully decided upon the manner of his arrival.

He thought that, as Abram was so far away, it might be a good idea to have the driver set him down at some indefinite spot on the sparsely settled road. But that would hardly do. Drivers are usually of the opinion that travelers are bound for some particular place; and it is no trouble at

all, in their opinion, to take you a little farther and finish the job. If he were to try such a maneuver, with impossible explanation and subterfuge, he would only make himself a mystery to the driver and become a subject for town talk.

And so David, being still a good marcher, and having no pack to carry, set out on foot. It was still early in the day. A long avenue of honey locusts marked his way through a quiet residence district and made pleasant going. The whole atmosphere of the place, with its semi-southern touches of negro drivers and dark nurse maids and its occasional glimpses of brooding pottery kilns, made a deep appeal to him. He had been told that his way would finally lead up a dug road. Possibly when he got farther along he would see something that he could remember. Things might recognize him, as it were, and look familiar. If they gave up any secret to him his problem would be solved.

So thinking, he crossed a railroad track, according to instructions, and turned round the base of a hill with a flat front of stone that went up as straight as a monument. Its sheer face presented a vast architecture of sandstone which spoke of many years of patient quarrying. And then he came to the foot of the rise which is the beginning of the dug road.

Presently the little valley spread out before him at his right. Across it a broad expanse of hillside rose into view. And still that question remained to be answered—What shall I say?

The hills gave him no reply. The little uncertain breezes —now a touch of cool like a breath from the night before, and then a wave of warmth premonitory of the August day—whispered no answer. A bumble-bee, encountering him in its path as it flew across the road, flew round and round him as if he were a stranger and made itself very bothersome. Then it gave him up and continued on its way. The bumble-bee knew where *it* was going. It was going right up over

the edge of that clay bank to the left to spend the day gathering sweets from the flowers in the cemetery. David did not know there was such a place up there over the edge of the road. The cemetery, as usual, was keeping itself secret; and it would surprise him with its presence about the time he had arrived midway between the house of James and the house of John.

He came to a stop a little farther along and looked about him, trying to remember. As nothing seemed familiar, he turned about and tried again to recognize that quarried hill with its immense face of sandstone. The fact that he could not recall such a monumental feature, so strongly marked and weather-beaten, and looking down at him like the very countenance of a locality, bothered him greatly. One naturally expects to remember a hill. A flat country may be said to have a countenance, but hills have physiognomy; and as one does not have to memorize a face in order to know it again, it would seem that even a child, if he had ever lived in such a locality, would be able to recognize it. And in a country of hills, each holding up its individual aspect against the sky and surrounding one's home with a multitude of familiar profiles, everlasting and always the same, the smallest boy would get a lasting impress of their features. At least, something should stir within him and whisper—This is the place.

So thought David as he looked again at the big area of sandstone, a carven cliff marked all over with color and character. And failing to get any response, he went on with the idea that scenes might grow more familiar as he drew nearer home.

Finally, being ascended to where the whole prospect of the valley lay before him, he stopped to make another trial. All he could tell himself, however, was that he had a feeling for hills—a feeling as if he had been born among them. He had that joy in a hilly country which springs up in the

heart of a homesick hill-dweller who has just escaped from the prison of the plains. But that was all. Nothing certified to him that this was the particular locality.

Somewhat skeptical, and disappointed, he moved on again hoping to have better success with the houses. Already the two houses were rising into view as he neared the top of the first steep ascent; first the solid-looking brick house of John with its tall stories and long French windows, and then the more picturesque and rambling frame house of James with its white clap-boards and row of square pillars and its festoons of grape-vines shading the side porch.

David moved on steadily past the house of John, taking it in with wide-open eyes but being careful not to loiter in a way that might attract attention. There was no one to be seen about the house; but down in the stable at the foot of a steep yard which dipped away toward the valley, he could hear the voice of a man who seemed to be talking to a horse.

He had gone but a little farther when, turning his attention for a moment to the left of the road, he saw all at once and for the first time the beautiful prospect of the hill-top cemetery. And in this moment of surprise there came to his ears, from somewhere amid the shelter of ancient oak and plumelike elm, the mournful call of a dove.

The effect of this little incident, coming out of that realm of quiet at the very moment the scene rose and revealed itself to him, was to turn his mind, as if by a touch of magic, back into the mood of those dreaming days in the hospital. It was like an echo out of his own mind; it might have been the very dove that haunted his imagination in far-off France, and kept calling, calling to him while he tried to reconstruct a picture which would lead him to his mother. That imagined picture was much like the scene he now saw; there was the same sylvan beauty, the same solemn and impressive silence. And the voice of that dove, coming to him

out of the past of twenty years ago, and at the same time out of the throat of an actual and present bird, was like a call from the realm of his childhood. It was as if his dream dove had come back to him with all its old surroundings; at once a voice and a vision from the long-forgotten past. The consequence of which was that, for the moment or two that it stopped him and held him spellbound, the cemetery seemed a dream more vivid than any reality, and the hard ground under him seemed hardly to be actual. And yet there had been nothing to work this effect but the voice of the bird calling his attention to the scene.

But this thralldom to a mood was not to be of long duration. For as he turned his eyes in the direction of the white, vineclad cottage ahead of him, he saw a woman walking in the garden. She was dressed in gray—a sort of dove gray—and made an alluring picture as she moved about between groups of tall-stemmed flowers. Even at this distance he could see the glint of jewel-like chunks of glass set at intervals along the borders of the walks; and—where the flowers were of thinner and lower growth—the lines of pearl-like pebbles that necklaced them about.

An impulse, almost overpowering, started him toward her. If he had followed his own great desire, he would have run all the way, burst in at the gate and announced himself to her. But a thought—a more rational prompting—held him back.

Possibly she was not his mother! And how was she to determine the matter? If he were her actual son, who bore his credentials with him, such precipitancy *might*, possibly, be warranted. But not in this case. He was a mere uncertain son. He could raise the question, but could not call her Mother. And that, as he now saw, would be nothing but tragedy.

After all he was only a question. He was a problem. And a problem of that kind which is calculated to enter into

the very depths of a woman's nature and probe it to the quick. As long as uncertainty lasted, there could be nothing but soul-searching distress and agony prolonged. It had in it nothing but the capacity for pain. And if in the end it proved a tragic disappointment, he could only regret that he had been the cause of her suffering.

As he stood and watched her, a slight, graceful figure moving about amid the flowers, these considerations, born out of a finer insight of her woman's nature, and prompted by his own share in this peculiar pain, rose to his mind and held him back. The most excruciating agony is that which hovers between the highest joy and the deepest disappointment. He was beginning to know it. And why should he, by any act of his, crucify her upon such a cross between promise and despair.

As David stood thinking the matter over he became aware of childish voices behind him. A sudden chorus of "Git ap, horsey, git ap," caused him to turn around. The conveyance consisted of a soap box in which three youngsters, part of Mrs. Liggett's brood, were taking a morning ride. The horsey in question, an overgrown and rickety youth of ten or twelve, was having considerable difficulty with the load. The wagon, evidently of his own make, had squeaky wooden axles and remarkably strong iron wheels such as are used on the little cars in coal mines. The main load of the vehicle consisted of the wheels themselves, and Horsey, who had been badly winded on the slope, was having hard work of it now that he was on level ground. The wagon was so far from serving the purposes of easy transportation, and the boy was so willing to toil and sweat for the sake of impersonating a horse, that it would have furnished amusement to anyone who was in the mood for laughter.

But David was in no such mood. He saw rather an opportunity to settle an important question.

"Are these the Watson houses?"

"Yas'm," replied Horsey.

"Is that one up there the house where Mrs. Orr lives?"

"Yas'm."

"Is that Mrs. Orr in the garden?"

"Mis' Lidy Orr? Yas'm. That's her."

David immediately went forward. If he could not speak to her he must at least see her. He must draw close to her, feel her presence, perchance look her in the eye. To turn back now was unthinkable; and to stand here and be tantalized by a mere distant view of her was not to be endured. And so he chose a middle course; he would walk past the place.

At first he went forward impetuously; and then, getting himself firmly in hand, he slackened his pace until he felt that he had adopted the gait of a mere casual wayfarer. And all the time he wanted to run.

As he drew nearer he could see what she was doing. With a pair of scissors she was snipping off the heads of a gorgeous display of asters. The fallen heads of the flowers, in a great variety of pastel shades, were strewn about her feet and lay like bright figures of a carpet along the path in which she was working. All the full-blown and perfect flowers, about to go to seed, were being sacrificed so that the plants would keep trying to reproduce their kind.

As he drew still nearer the details of her person came into view; and all else passed out of his mind as he centered his attention upon her.

Luckily she did not take particular notice of him as he passed by. Once she looked up and he found himself gazing into her eyes; but he averted his glance quickly, not trusting his tell-tale soul to another moment of such encounter. So high his heart was beating, and so conscious was he of the important part his legs were playing as he tried to simulate the pace of a mere casual wayfarer, that he felt as if she would be able to read him through and through. Those

eyes, so soft and clear-seeing, were not eyes to lie to—nor did he want to. As he got his gaze away from her, letting it slip off in the general direction of the scenery, he felt like an arrant actor—one who was using the actual world about him as a stage whereon to strut past and belie every instinct of his being. And in this instant he felt that a hard trial was ahead of him. He felt that in order to stand before her as an unconcerned young man, concealing his emotions and trying her out in what was essentially a *lie,* every atom of his being would have to turn actor and back him up in the falsehood. And yet he might have to make a test of their relationship in that way!

As he again ventured a look in her direction he saw that she had resumed her task with the flowers, bending over them with her scissors. Her gray gown, low in the neck and edged with a soft fichu of lace, displayed her throat and bosom in a V-shaped frame of white. She was beautiful, not as a girl is beautiful, but with a beauty more harmonious and complete and almost soothingly restful. She was a beautiful Mother! Her hair, a powdery gray still warm with the soft brown of her girlhood, seemed not so much the mark of age as the last refining touch to her delicate style of beauty. And even her gray gown, harmonizing thus with her own proper self, seemed to be the natural vesture of a nature that had been softened and purified and made still more beautiful by the world's high trials of her womanhood. But it was her eyes that had told all this to him—and made him look away. They were not eyes to lie to. They were made for truth. And the communication of a mother's pure and inviolable faith.

When he had almost passed the place, and reached a point where the corner of the house was about to shut off his view, he turned partially about and stood a while taking a final look at her.

Now she straightened up and went farther down the path.

As she did so the soft folds of her gown followed her movements in lines that seemed to emanate from the very gracefulness of her figure; and David, beholding her thus, and feeling, rather than noting, the whole mysterious charm and poise of her being, felt as if he were beholding a new vision of Woman. And that vision, as it moved in the scene before him, informed him for the first time of the true dignity and almost regal beauty of his Mother. For the moment it seemed to him that Motherhood was a secret and sacred order; and she, clad in the gray habiliments of her kind, was the mother superior and chosen representative of them all.

But was she *his* mother? That question came back. Her beauty had surprised him, and this query arose anew out of his incredulity. It seemed almost unbelievable that his journey, a mere groping quest that had had its beginning in a dream, should have led him to the right spot and ended in reality such as this. At the same time he was not surprised out of belief, but rather confirmed in it; for what was she but the fulfillment of all that he had looked forward to—no more beautiful, in fact, than that dream of Mother in the hospital. It was that, with its vague, unpictured beauty which had drawn him incessantly toward her and brought him to this place. He had formed no definite idea of his mother; he had simply imagined that she was beautiful. And now this woman in the garden fixed the idea, furnishing him with the picture. It was a picture which, whether she proved to be his mother or not, had struck deeply in his mind and become his ideal; and until he could find his actual mother it would be hard to dislodge. And thus, while the logical part of him was saying Nay to what was before him, the deeper part of his nature was having its way and accepting her fully. And in this mood of acceptance he gazed with a new vividness of sight upon the cameolike refinement of her profile, and powdery softness of her hair, and the deli-

cate lines and modeling of her neck. And finally and with more dwelling thought upon that fair expanse, so finely framed in fichu, where the sun, as with a special shaft of light, lit up her white, maternal bosom.

During this period of stolen observation, David had stopped where the corner of the house so nearly shut off his view of her that another step would take him out of sight. His exit thus well provided for, he could prolong his time of looking up to the very moment when she might be on the point of discovering him.

Presently, when she again looked up and seemed about to turn her head in his direction, he took a sudden step back. Then he continued on a safe distance, not stopping till the whole bulk of the house had intervened between him and her. And there, like an actor upon whom the curtain has just fallen, he dropped his rôle of casual wayfarer and give himself over to his perplexity. What should he do now?

CHAPTER II

If David had followed his inclinations he would, of course, have turned about immediately and spent the rest of the day walking up and down past that garden. But that was impossible. Acting with ordinary discretion, he could only venture to pass it once more when, having finished a supposed errand, he would be on his way back. He accordingly stayed where he was, waiting for the imaginary errand to be performed, and hoping that, by the time a reasonable amount of imaginary business had been transacted, she would not have disappeared into the house.

While he was so engaged his eye wandered over into the cemetery, and suddenly an idea suggested itself. Over there he could walk or sit and spend any length of time whatever. It was a cemetery. He could come here day after day if he chose; and he could sit by a grave gazing across into that garden. His presence there would not raise the least question. He could comport himself as he pleased; he could be agitated or thoughtful, peaceful or perplexed, it would make no difference. All that he did would seem natural, being interpreted in the one light.

As this scheme thrust itself upon him, and the facts assured him of their completeness, he struck boldly across the road. He came out in sight of the garden without fear of being observed, and entered the arched gateway.

His next care was to find a convenient grave; and presently he found it. John More, aged 68. By the side of it was a cast iron settee, painted green. Here he sat down and again turned his attention, not too directly, upon the figure in the garden. The grave with which he had chosen

to associate himself was on a slight knoll which caught the shade of a magnificent elm and was partially screened by shrubbery; and as the cemetery at this point sloped slightly upward from the road, the whole disposal of things was such as to give him a view like that provided in a theater, not forgetting the advantages of the screened settee.

How long he sat there and watched he could hardly have said. Ostensibly the guest of John More, he feasted his eyes upon her. He spent the time noting every shade and expression of her being, storing up impressions of her and growing in silent intimacy as one who was learning her by heart. The whole influence of his surroundings—the cooing of a dove in the near-by elm, the murmurous silence of the cemetery, and, more than all, her figure moving in the glass-bordered garden—held him in thrall and put him in a mood from which he was not inclined to dissociate himself. In such circumstances, the passage of time was as nothing.

In this mood, there took hold of him an utter and unquestioning belief that she was his mother. It held him in complete possession—a happy state of being stealing down upon him and enveloping him in its atmosphere regardless of his logical faculties or any evidence in the case. Even when he roused himself to reason, and looked candidly at the realities about him, it was difficult to believe anything else. A dove called to him from the lofty elm—the very dove of his dreams! When he raised his eyes and contemplated the scene before him, it was just such a scene as had haunted his imagination in the hospital! It was as if that vision had now erected itself before him; it had the same silent spirit of existence, and the same mysterious communion of things in its hushed and half-whispering atmosphere! But the most convincing evidence of all was there across the road. The garden of his fancy—the place of pearls and emeralds! There it was before his eyes, every green chunk of glass holding its appointed place and shining authentically in the

sun! With such witnesses before him, it was hard to be a doubter.

At the same time he was very well aware that all this was no evidence at all; and that he ought not to allow himself to fall into this too easy acceptance of her. To thus give way to the spell of the place, and become settled in this way of regarding her was very undesirable. For if it turned out in the end that she was no relation of his, he would only have paved the way for deeper disappointment. So thinking, he roused himself from revery and brought his mind sharply back to the business in hand. Facts were what he must keep in mind.

First of all, this dove would have to be excluded. The species was widely distributed and was likely to be met with almost anywhere. Therefore the bird meant nothing.

As for the scene about him, that also was of no authority. It was the spirit of the place that he so deeply remembered, not these particular trees. It was simply a cemetery.

And the garden! Here was the deepest disappointment of all. He had learned in Zanesville that such outdoor ornaments might be expected in almost any glass-making district; and twenty or thirty years ago such gardens in these parts were common. And so the garden meant nothing. There were other cemeteries, other doves, other beautiful gardens.

After all, there was nothing left to depend upon but that letter Z. That and the half-remembered N that came somewhere in the word. This had drawn his attention to Zanesville. And he had come here simply because there was a woman in a neighboring town whose child, about his own age, had disappeared. These unwelcome facts he must cling to. They were all he had to work upon. The whole issue was of such a nature that it would have to rest on positive proof. Otherwise there could be no lasting and fulfilling satisfaction either for him or for her. She, as well as he, would need to *know*.

Looking facts thus clearly in the eye, he saw that it was she alone that affected him and bound these things together—her beauty and rare fitness for the part. It was a delusion that had hold of him. He had dreamed his mother, in all her gentleness and beauty; and this woman in the garden had somehow become the substance of his dream. Thus he cleared his mind and brought it back to the point, inwardly reciting the facts in the very face of his surroundings.

After which he fell to watching her again with a new and still deeper interest. Again, as she engaged his whole attention, the mood of belief came down and enveloped him. Again all these witnesses, so lately contradicted, stole round him and claimed him for their own. The dove, brooding somewhere in the depths of the tree, raised its voice and seemed to say him nay. The quiet grove again erected itself as out of the very substance of his dream and stood before him as a thing of reality; and that lofty elm, so like the one he had looked up to in his youth, stood forth and became a special witness of the days that were gone. Again he was conscious of nothing but her, his eye following her every move, her beauty photographing itself more deeply upon his soul, his whole nature accepting her and going out longingly toward her. For it was quite possible that she was his Mother!

After a time—he did not know how long except that the sun was now much higher and had begun to encroach upon his end of the iron seat—she went into the house.

He moved out of the sun and stayed on in the hope that she might come out again. But evidently she had gone in to stay.

As yet he had not quite shaken off the spell that her presence cast upon him. A sort of prophetic happiness, a pleasant faith had come upon him—a belief which needed no other support than his own natural desires and the quiet reassurances that seemed, in this place, to come to him from

every quarter. For a time this pleasant feeling wrapped him round and lingered with him. But when she did not reappear, and her continued absence left him contemplating the empty facts of the garden, he drew himself suddenly together and pulled a note-book from his pocket.

It was a waterproof note-book, covered with black oil-cloth, which he had carried with him through all his adventures in France. In a section reserved for the purpose he had made a note of each possible clue to his birthplace. One after another he had set them down; and there were blank pages waiting for memories that never came. Item one, a tumble-bug, duly set forth and followed by the damning conclusion—No clue. So it was with the grove, the dove, the baby-buggy and everything which now existed about him. They each had their place here in black and white; and with them the fact, in equally plain black and white, that they could be of no use to him. All ended in the same cool conclusion. It was a record of delusions that had ended nowhere, of promises that came to nothing.

He confronted his mind with this plain, businesslike record. He must set his emotions aside and get to work on some plan that would lead to proof. He could no longer afford to indulge in dreams that confused the evidence and ran ahead of the real issue. In the days that were to follow, his feelings must stand aside and give way to reason.

To this end the note-book worked with great efficiency. Having perused its conclusions in plain black and white he looked about him with a new eye. And now he saw the place for just what it was. It was a graveyard across from a garden. The peace which it seemed to hold for him was simply a reminder of that peace which he had known in the hospital. And, now that he thought of it, a strange peace that was. Not only a strange peace but sudden, for he was shot into it out of the very thick of battle. There was but an instant from the cannon's mouth to oblivion; and there

had been peace from that moment. And now (his gaze taking in the tombstones about him) he reflected how near it had come to being such a peace as this.

As he emerged from his warm imaginings into the cool and somewhat chilly atmosphere of intellect, he snapped the book together and put it back into his pocket. He felt that he was now prepared to take hold of his problem and abide by the outcome. He rose superior to the whisperings of hope. And *her* influence over him, convincing him that she was his mother with no other evidence than her beauty, would have to be banished from his mind.

This triumph, if it may so be called, brought with it a sense of loss. Certainly the evidence of things about him, intangible as they were, must be considered as having *some* validity. It seemed more than a coincidence that, in a quest which had its origin in a blind man's song, he should come to a place which so completely matched his dreams and seemed to have such a special message for him! On the other hand, it was no evidence at all. There was nothing whatever to show that this was the place and she the woman.

The negative conclusion was unwelcome to him, whatever his mind might say about it. At the same time he did not feel warranted, nor even safe, in taking things for granted.

And here entered Doubt mingled with Desire—the most potent mixture of human suffering. Despite himself, the experiences of this morning had given him a new desire to see his mother. And while he saw her image before him, and his whole soul reached out to her, he saw no means by which she might be attained. It is a posture painful to the soul—a state of being which human nature does not brook for long, even though it has to take to delusion for its remedy. Nevertheless, he would have to remain in that state until the issue was settled.

He had better set to work promptly. It was becoming apparent to him that if this problem drew itself out to any

great length it would become a growing source of pain to him. From now on, whenever his deeper nature told him that she was his mother, he would have to say that she was *not*. And when reason said she was not, he would have to admit that possibly she *was*. It was all quite possible. And thus, torn between doubt and desire, and put off with alternate promise and denial, he was likely to have a trying time before him. And now he began to suspect that the greatest suffering is not in the hospital nor the most tragic struggles upon the battlefield.

In the midst of this foretaste of trial, a sudden light shot athwart his mind and helped somewhat to alleviate the situation. It was the thought that he had not, by any inadvised work or act, *involved her* in such a period of suspense. By this experience of an hour or two he had got a still deeper insight of what *her* feelings in the matter might be. As for him, he had never *known* his mother, did not remember having loved nor cared for her. But *she* had known her *son!* And if such were his feelings toward a mere imaginary mother, what might hers be toward the child she had loved and fondled and definitely learned to know! And what would her trial be to learn that her son might have come back—and yet might not!

It was a pure stroke of luck, he reflected, that he had not that morning done something amiss. He had come wandering up that slope of road with no definite plan in mind—nothing but impatience to set his eyes upon the place. And suddenly he had come upon her! By a lucky prompting he had had some feeling of her situation; and he had suddenly become an actor, and gone skulking behind the house, and then conceived this arrant deception of the graveyard. All of which, obnoxious as it had been to him, was now a cause for congratulation.

No, she must not be brought into this. Not unless something definite was determined and her participation became

absolutely necessary. If she was not his mother, it would be unjust. If she was his mother, he ought to have more consideration for her. Thus it only remined for him to go back to Zanesville and set his brains to work. He would call upon Mr. Tyler, whose address he had in his note-book just as Mr. Quigley had given it to him. He would, advisedly, take Mr. Tyler into the matter and enlist his aid. She must not be made to suffer.

So thinking he rose from the iron seat and turned his thoughts in the direction of Zanesville. Pausing, however, to pay a sort of adieu to his only friend in these parts—John More, aged 68.

CHAPTER III

It is a mark of a business man that he knows when he is through listening. There comes an instant when he has made up his mind. Rather, it is an instant when the mind makes up itself, the judgment suddenly reacting to the facts in the case and the whole mind crystallizing in conclusion. It is as quick and furtive as the eye of a weasel at the mouth of a burrow; and once you have caught sight of this moment in the mind it tells you that you have come to the end. He has come out to meet you, but he has suddenly gone back into himself again.

The earnest supplicant in the case, telling his story to the best of his ability, and keenly alive to the state of the mental atmosphere, is usually aware of the instant when it happens. It is a subtle communication signalized by nothing in particular. There is a flicker in the current of intercourse, a glance at a sheaf of documents, the summary shifting of an ink bottle, a momentary dropping of attention which shows that the line of communication has broken down. After which, in spite of the most courteous listening, and the flowing of the conversation as smoothly as ever, you know it is no use. The man of business has come to his conclusion; possibly he has formed some bad impression of you. You would like to go back and try it over again, but this you cannot do.

If (as was the case with Mr. Spence Tyler) he is a business man of the most finished courtesy, and if, out of some finer sentiment toward the state of your feelings, he is particularly desirous of concealing his opinion, it makes no difference. The instant of adverse judgment glimpses forth

and betrays itself, after which you know that the attentive listening and respectful consideration is but an urbane tolerance of your talk.

Mr. Spence Tyler, keeping office hours in his rooms over the bank, was a most pleasant gentleman to meet. David, having mentioned Mr. Quigley and gained admission upon grounds which he designated as private, came to the conclusion that there were but two classes of callers—those who did not get in at all, and those who, being admitted, were received with distinct cordiality. It was a live and personal hospitality which had more the mark of culture than of mere business.

In this "slow" city, David had become aware of the type and noted it with interest. And he had connected it up with all these smoking kilns and furnaces and inexhaustible clay pits and black mouths of mines where the men with little torches go in to work. It was a place of basic industries, answering the world's larger needs; and therefore its offices were not the usual beehives of quick scheming and feverish hurry and of little managers who do a thousand things a day to keep the stream of money coming in. A slow city! Rather it was one whose doings were deliberate and inevitable, its commerce consisting wholly of its own products, its finances established, its speculation reduced to the large and steady output of necessary things. And in this atmosphere of old fortunes there is a slowness which takes time to live, a semi-southern leisure in the culture which distinguishes it.

David, with the instinct of a Chicagoan, which told him to get his man promptly interested, came at once to the point of his business. He had reasons to believe that he might be the lost son of Mrs. Orr. And he had come, upon the recommendation of Mr. Quigley, to get advice.

Having made this beginning, David saw that what was to follow could hardly be put in the form of a concise and

business statement of facts. The things that had befallen him were not of that nature. What he had to tell was a story—an inward experience which almost amounted to a confession. And so he forgot his Chicago hurry and told it as a story, beginning with his experience in the hospital.

Mr. Tyler became deeply interested. David had no trouble in getting along with his last experiences in battle and its first aftermath in the hospital. This was a thing of action; and the tale moved easily, telling itself.

But when he came to later developments, and those things of present import—a tumble-bug, a dove and the letter Z—he saw that these things were hardly to be laid on a business man's desk divested of their atmosphere and surroundings. Without sympathetic understanding they were trivial and ridiculous. Too much rapidity of telling would make them that. David there apologized for the length of his story and questioned whether Mr. Tyler, sitting here at his desk during business hours, had time to listen.

Mr. Tyler had the time. Indeed, he was quite at leisure. Furthermore, he assured the young man that he was deeply interested in his experiences in the war. This was said with a cordiality, a warm sincerity which had the effect of setting time aside and making business of no importance. And though David did not feel that his man had yet become really interested, he saw that he was being accorded the respect and almost affectionate regard which Mr. Tyler felt toward a soldier. Over the desk was the Flag—the Stars and Stripes looking down as if presiding over the conference; and this did much to open the way for that confession of a deep experience.

In this new atmosphere, the dove, the tumble-bug and other trifling properties of his tale, began to live and move and have a being; and as David went on, stating their effect on him fully and frankly, he could see that the business man had an imagination and that it was working with him. Mr.

Tyler listened attentively and with passing looks of pleasure —as if he were indulging in memories of his own. And when David got to Chicago, and discovered the letter Z, and showed how all these elusive and fragmentary things began to draw together and corroborate one another so that the whole consensus of their meaning was pointing toward the Clay City, Mr. Tyler, who was himself an enthusiastic Man from Zanesville, opened his eyes to the fuller light and became a convert. If there is such a thing as quality in listening, he might now be said to be listening co-operatively, helpfully, actively. Like any one else who has become deeply interested in a story, his mind began to run ahead and see a unique and triumphant conclusion.

Then came the cemetery—that place of half assurances, growing doubts and difficult thinking. Here David confined himself to the uncertainty of things. So far he had brought the tale forward after the manner of an attorney, warmly concerning himself with one side of the case. He now, with a view to explaining how the whole matter stood, made a short statement of the other side of the question. The emotional and intimate element had been important in explaining what brought him to Zanesville. This was now dropped from the narrative, the time having come for the consideration of pure evidence. And as for his spell of enchantment with *her,* he did not introduce that. It was not evidence.

Such then was his case. He had explained what led him to Zanesville and what brought him to Mr. Tyler's office. And possibly Mr. Tyler could help him prove that Mrs. Orr was his mother.

The business man, no longer sanguine, and forgetful of any manner of deportment, either courteous or discourteous, went into a session of thought.

After a time he went to an old-fashioned book-case, reached into the back recesses of a lower drawer and brought

forth a packet containing photographs. There must have been a hundred or more, some of them small and yellow with age, others of more modern taking. Tied up with them was a souvenir publication giving a history of the city and its makers. He undid the packet and sorted the pictures over, laying certain ones aside. He gathered these up like a pack of cards and fell to considering them, one after another, in comparison with the face of his visitor. Each picture, after deep scrutiny and frequent reference to the face of David, was placed at the bottom of the pack. When he had gone through all, and the first picture had come out on top, he returned them to the packet and disposed of the whole by pushing it under the overhanging pigeon holes of his desk.

"Have you no marks on your person?" he inquired.

"I have several," answered David, "but not the kind you mean."

"None at all?"

"No—a few freckles."

Again Mr. Tyler gave himself over to thought. It was not thought of the same quality as before—considerably shrewder, David thought, at times.

"It seems," began Mr. Tyler, "that you place great stress on that garden as proving that you come from here. It appeals to your imagination."

"Yes."

"What you remember is simply glass. There are plenty of other glassmaking districts. And plenty of gardens."

"Yes, but——"

"Simply glass. And there are doves and tumble-bugs all over."

"But the baby-buggy. Now that——"

"They were quite prevalent. Used all over. When they went out of style the negro women used to deliver washing in them. They were very handy for that."

"But that Z. You must remember——"

"That might have been Zebulon or any other such place. There are all sorts of queer names for country towns."

There came a pause. David began to feel that he had hardly done justice to his side of the case. The contrary evidence, as written in his note-book and pondered in the cemetery, had been too strongly put. It had the effect of an adverse view of the facts. With this in mind, he now began to restate it all, emphasizing the coincidences.

Mr. Tyler made a move which had the effect of cutting off all further comment. He turned about in his chair, pushed the packet an inch or two farther into its recess and sat upright in his chair. In that instant, though he could not attribute the knowledge to anything definite, David saw that the case had gone against him. It was a subtle communication, electrically quick, and marked by nothing Mr. Tyler had said or done so much as a dropping of the temperature within himself.

"Then you think," said David, "that I might not have come from this region? Or even this state?"

"What you have told me does not even amount to coincidence," said Mr. Tyler. "It is hardly a coincidence that this is a glass-making region. And it is no coincidence that we have the same bugs and birds as the other states in the Union. But suppose it were proved that you *did* come from this region. Let us assume that it is. Then the whole case amounts to this. Zanesville has over twenty-five thousand inhabitants. The Muskingum valley has many more. In the course of twenty years, with changing population, it amounts to still more. It is a populous manufacturing district with a considerable floating population. Now I think you will admit that, of a hundred thousand families which may be living here at any one time, a certain number of children become orphaned at an early age. Of these, some are quite likely to lose trace of their parents. Now, after twenty years, a young man who has had some such experi-

ence comes across Zanesville. And because he has memories of a similar district, he reasons that he must be the son of Mrs. Orr!"

David saw that he had lost his case.

"Would you mind letting me see those photographs?" he asked.

"Certainly not. I beg your pardon."

Mr. Tyler settled back in his chair and watched with interest the meeting between David and his supposed relatives. "They are there from both sides," he offered. "Both Orrs and Watsons."

And presently David, after long and puzzled scrutiny, returned the pictures to their place on the desk.

"Do they look like you?" asked Mr. Tyler, a little triumphant.

"I can't say that they do," answered David.

"I thought as much."

"But there is a little resemblance in some of them—in some ways. Don't you think so?"

"As much as you might be able to find in any cityful of people, if you were picking out points of resemblance. People run somewhat in types, you know."

"But you think there is some resemblance—in some of them?"

"That isn't the point, young man. Let me ask you a question. If you were to meet one of these people on the street, would you know he was a relative of yours?"

"No."

"Would you expect *him* to know he was a relative of yours?"

"No."

"Well, then."

There was a touch of something in Mr. Tyler's manner which betrayed a considerable change of attitude toward his caller. David wondered what the reason could be. It was

something which went beyond the cool consideration of evidence and savored somewhat of opposition. And David, feeling it, offered opposition in turn.

"Now look here, Mr. Tyler," he said, "this matter has got to be considered as a whole. I am quite willing to admit that none of these things, taken separately, is evidence. But you say yourself that there is a little resemblance in some of those pictures. It is not enough to be recognized; I could not say at once that I was a relative. But when this is taken in *connection* with——"

"Oh, no, no, no," said Mr. Tyler, waving a hand deprecatingly. "That will not do. The proof in a case of this kind has got to be absolute, conclusive. Nothing merely speculative and circumstantial will do. Mrs. Orr, as you no doubt know, is a woman of considerable wealth. She is a woman of property."

David understood. And this new fact, deepening the difficulty as he saw it in all its pregnant bearings, took him aback."

"Pardon me, Mr. Tyler," he answered, "but I did *not* know. I knew nothing whatever about such things. I came here to find my mother."

David reached for his hat. He felt that he might as well go.

What a misapprehension! What a complete misunderstanding of his attitude toward his mother—toward Mrs. Orr! The fond vision of her—all his confession of his one great desire—had suddenly been overwhelmed with the hard clink of dollars and cents! Just at the point where he had advanced all his facts and was looking for assistance, a new obstruction had been thrown across his path—an immovable pile of money. And of course, beside that stack of gold, his dove and his tumble-bug looked ridiculous!

"Oh, well," continued Mr. Tyler, "whether you knew it

or not, you can see what I want is evidence. Something that can really be called proof."

"I came here to find my mother," said David, a flush of anger rising to his cheek. "Do you mean to say that I——"

"I mean to say nothing except that you will have to do something more than you have done toward solving your problem. There is nothing here to work on. I have responsibilities, you know."

David's wrath had been rapidly mounting. "As you no doubt know"—these words had hit him hard and continued to rankle. The flame was burning in his cheek; but he kept a stiff upper lip until he could trust himself to speak.

Mr. Tyler had listened attentively—he had, indeed, been most willing to co-operate. But he was a business man; and he had "responsibilities." Those responsibilities were toward Mrs. Orr. As David thought this over, and began to take the business man's point of view, the rising tide of resentment was rapidly allayed. Mr. Tyler was her representative. He occupied a position of trust. Because he was diligent and faithful in the affairs of others he had been honored with the administration of that most important of all things—money. It was right that he should place Mrs. Orr's affairs above all else, guarding and protecting her interests. In fact, it was because Mr. Tyler stood in such relation to her, and was known as a man of character, that Mr. Quigley had referred to him.

Naturally, then, Mr. Tyler's interest in the story had dropped dead the moment he began to look at it from his own proper point of view. There was no evidence; upon seeing which his instinct as a business man rose paramount to his interest in a romantic tale.

David, upon seeing it in this light, and remembering that he was a stranger, recovered from the shock of having his motives questioned—if, indeed, that had been the intention.

At the same time he saw that his business here was at an end, and he rose to go.

"Of course you understand, Mr. Tyler," he said, "that I came here with no object but to find my mother. I came here hoping to get your help. I was told that you were the one who had been most intimately concerned with her affairs. I see that you can do nothing. If I gather your opinion rightly, you do not even think there are grounds for believing that I came from this part of the country."

Mr. Tyler reached into a pigeon-hole and produced a map —a B. & O. folder. He spread it out on the desk exhibiting the eastern half of the United States. Then he reached for a pen and began marking it off in subdivisions of his own. First he was in Ohio, then in Illinois, then over in Pennsylvania. And all the while he accompanied this work with a running comment upon the availability and juxtaposition of sand, coal and transportation. David began to understand. He was mapping out all those parts of the country where geological and other conditions were favorable to glass manufacture. With a quick stroke he struck a line through Ohio from north to south, cutting the state in two, explaining, as he did so, that the crossing of this line, going east, marked a different set of conditions. Zanesville was to the east; it was in one of the sub-divisions he was considering.

David watched this work with surprised admiration. The man knew all about glass. He was deep in the strategy of commerce—of natural resources, transportation, topography and methods of manufacture. It was commercial geology interpreted in terms of the railroad and the factory. He cut off a section of a state with as ready a stroke as a woman would cut a piece of pie. It was purely commercial. And yet when he struck his own state, and especially that eastern half of it, his words took on a warmth of sentiment, a sort of poetic enthusiasm. He began to talk like a Man from Zanesville.

"There now," he announced, smoothing the map out. "That is about your case. You might have come from here or here or here. Maybe from this part of Illinois—or over here in Pennsylvania."

David gave this work due consideration.

"Yes," he said. "But how about Z?" He said it stubbornly.

Mr. Tyler sank back into his revolving chair and dropped his pen on the desk. At the same time a smile, an amused look, came over his face.

"Well, my young man," he said, "stick to Z if you want. I don't blame you. It might be Zonia or some other fool thing. I don't know. There are plenty of states to choose from."

David's mind resented the conclusion. He was stubborn. He was interested in finding his mother—deeply concerned with any evidence that might seem to lead toward her. As he looked at this work on the map, and ran his eye back and forth from Pennsylvania to Illinois, he felt that he was being pushed farther and farther from her. To be thus unceremoniously thrust about from state to state was hardly agreeable to his state of mind. He felt that he was being too easily "railroaded" out of a clue; and the more he looked at this map the more stubborn he became.

The evidence he could not deny. The whole case against him was simply too successful and complete; altogether too thoroughly proven and founded on scientific fact. It was too much. As he stood confronting it (his fancy preparing to bid farewell to a gray-gowned figure in a garden) his mind braced itself against all such conclusions. He tacitly admitted it all; but it was another case where man can bring his mind to a conclusion but cannot make it drink. If they did not prove what he wanted, then they were not *his* facts. And he was going right out to get the facts he was in need of, if possible.

Again he took his hat and bade Mr. Tyler good-bye.

Half way to the door he stopped and turned about. A new alternative occurred to him. He had another card to play.

"I suppose you understand, Mr. Tyler, that I could just as well have taken this matter to Mrs. Orr herself. I came very near doing so. But I did not."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that. Not that. At least not now. And anyway, what good would it do you?"

"I don't know what good it might do. Right there is the point. She might know things that you and I do not."

"Oh. Your idea is that she might have some—instinct?"

"Well, whether she had or not, she would at least have an instinct to co-operate—to find out. She would try to solve the matter in one way or another. In fact, she could *hardly rest until she had.*"

Mr. Tyler gave this turn of affairs deep thought.

"I will co-operate with you to this extent," he announced. "I shall be going out to Abram soon to see her on some business matters. You might go along with me as a stranger. I shall see that her attention is sufficiently called to you—that is, as a young man, a soldier. One about the age her son would be. We will make a little test of your theory. That ought to satisfy you."

"When?" said David.

"In three or four days. In the meantime we might give the matter further thought. If you get any real evidence I shall be in my office and willing to talk to you any afternoon after two o'clock."

"Thank you," said David.

CHAPTER IV

Three days, four days, five days had passed; and now a sixth. And probably a seventh on which to wrest some conclusion out of a week whose sum total had been nothing. There had been no progress.

On the afternoon of the fifth he had made the trip to Abram. He had posed in the guise of a mere visitor before her who might be his mother. And after a trying half hour of it he had passed out of her presence as such.

Up to this time he had had something to look forward to. Now there seemed nothing to do but to look back. The time of waiting had at least been filled with impatience and the excitements of uncertainty; but this excitement was now at an end, leaving him again with the problem on his hands.

It was a problem that was beginning to wear itself out with the working. As he again turned to it and saw the same scanty materials before him, it brought him to a complete halt. It struck him "deader than a great reckoning in a little room." The tumble-bug, always struggling with the ball and getting nowhere, was beginning to pall upon him.

The days of promise he had whiled away in sight-seeing, exploring all sorts of byways and obscure neighborhoods and hidden haunts of industry. He did this not only to overcome the tedium of waiting, but largely in the hope that some little thing might serve to jog his memory. Some sight or sound, some subtle intimation—he could not tell what—might conjure up remembrance and give him a key to the past. One afternoon he spent his time along the river bank; and sat down to watch a group of boys whose air of expectancy attracted his attention. Presently, at the sound

of a steamboat whistle, they hurried out of their clothes and became a waiting knot of buff; and when the boat had passed and the waves began traveling shoreward, they all rushed in and enjoyed themselves in the live water. They had a hilarious time of it, the smaller ones splashing round where the surf broke on the shallows, and the more venturous ones striking out and bobbing up and down in the artificial sea. He had never seen this sort of sea-bathing before. And yet it seemed to him that he had. His imagination was beginning to play tricks with him, taunting him with partial glimpses and even mocking him, at times, as with the ghost of a dead memory. All he could say was that if he had ever been a boy in these parts, this river bank would have exactly suited him. More and more its atmosphere seemed native to him; but he could not remember. He could not think far enough *back*. Finally, when the boys had come in and were returning to shirts and trousers, he went away with a sense of loss and disappointment that was little short of homesickness.

Another time he wandered up an alley where the intermittent clink of a hammer indicated some sort of home industry. Here he came across a mosaic worker who had set up his atelier in his own back yard—a piece of worn canvas fastened by one edge to the woodshed and supported at the remaining corners by two poles, which rude contrivance protected his eyes from the glare of the sun. In this Oriental fashion, with only a small hammer and a slab of iron, he was breaking off pieces from long, square sticks of tile and building them up in a picture before him. A small boy, equally interested with David, came along and inserted his nose between the palings to watch this beautiful sort of puzzle work. The mosaic worker, absorbed in his task, said nothing; but yet he did not seem to be bothered by spectators. David stayed a long while, noting the deftness with which the odd shaped pieces of tile were broken off on the

edge of the iron and fitted into their appointed places in the right size and shape and color. It was slow work—tedious work were it not that the worker was so taken up with the progress of his design. And yet not so tedious, thought David, as wandering about and waiting. And not so trying as his own task—dealing with pictures that dwelt somewhere in his mind and yet seemed destined never to materialize. It was like trying to make something out of nothing.

On one of these rambles—it was the afternoon of this discouraging sixth day—he chanced upon an old potter whose talk interested him greatly. He had spent the morning visiting potteries, watching vases and ornamental ware cast in molds, flower pots being stamped out of the clay with plunging dies like coins in a mint, and, at another place, square shouldered jugs being made by machine. And finally, after much exploring, he came upon the old potter who was making jugs of the round-shouldered variety, whose lighter and more graceful forms have still to be thrown up by hand.

This ancient member of the craft was a sort of local historian; and in lieu of pencil and paper he had a habit of seizing a chunk of clay and building up his meaning in a moment.

"My father was a shoemaker," he explained, "and he mendit everything with leather. But there's nothing so handylike as clay, especially when you're argyin'."

Thus he dealt with David. When the young man needed to know the lay of the land, and could not gather the topography in mere words, the potter would seize upon a supply of his familiar material, set up all the hills in their appropriate places, and show the routes between. He even went so far with one of his maps as to include the Y bridge, showing how it spanned two rivers at once and connected the three divisions of the city. And after such an illustra-

tion he would gather up his clay again, rolling roads and hills and rivers into a ball and holding it in his hand till it should be needed in the next pass of the conversation.

As he was considerable of a philosopher, and had the years and somewhat the look of a bearded prophet, David became interested. Finally he became so charmed with the garrulous flow of talk, the versatile clay and the teeming fund of reminiscence that he stayed on to the noon hour. And then, seeing that his prophet had a dinner pail, he went without his own dinner to get more light on the past.

"Ay, my boy," he continued, "the old bridge was a great bridge. And no like the new one they have built of concrete. And I was sorry the day they tore it down."

"But the new one is a very fine bridge," said David.

"Oh, ay. It is a fine and a beautiful one. And a famous one, too. There is no other like it in the country crossing two rivers at once. But the old bridge was not all open to the weather like that. It was all boarded up on the sides with open windows looking out on the two rivers coming together, and it had shingles on the roof—a great long tunnel of a house where you could stop and visit and be in out of the rain. And many an argymint have I had in it on a rainy day. And it never had an autymobile in it in all the seventy years that it stood. Just horses and horses going through it for seventy years. Sherman's army went through it—all his wagon trains when they were going West after the war. It took them several weeks to go through it. And Barnum's circus and all the other circuses had to go through it. And all the families that were going west to take up land. For it was a part of the National Pike from the East to the West, and they all had to go through it. And there were all the home horses taking things from one part of the city to the other—the three parts of it. They all had to go through it. There were twelve hallways in it, four in each of the three arms, and in the middle was a big room where

they crossed over to the hallway they wanted to take. Our home horses all knew that middle room by heart and could cross over to the right passage. But I doubt it would puzzle a horse that was a stranger to it—and a driver too."

"Twelve halls!" exclaimed David. "I didn't know it was ever like that. There are only three parts of it now."

"Oh, ay. Three arms. That's why they call it the Y. Now they are just three open roads across the water. But the old one was like a house, a big, long wooden Y of a house; and it was timbered and braced and built like a house. So each arm had two hallways for horses, one for horses that were going and one for those that were coming; and on each side were two small halls for people coming and going. That's four in an arm; and three times four is twelve. In the middle was the big room with the twelve hallways opening into it. And I tell you that was a noisy place with the two dams roaring away and the hallways of horses coming and going and stomping on its floor and echoing into it. It was a big bass drum of a room in there, with all the horses and people crossing over and weaving past one another to get to the passage that would take them on their way. And the smell of it!"

"The smell of it?" inquired David, evincing new interest. "What did it smell like?"

The old potter spent a while in thought.

"Well now, I don't know as I could tell you. Why did you want to know that, now?"

"Because," said David, "I know what one country smells like. And I thought maybe I would know this by smell."

"Did ye, now! What country was that?"

"France," said David.

"And what did that smell like?"

"I didn't like it. I was glad when we got out on the ocean and left that air behind. I noticed it most when I was getting out of it."

"Well then," said the potter, "the old Y didn't smell like that. It wasn't a smell that you would want to get away from, but the kind you would always want to come back to. It was old—seventy years old. But I don't know that I could exactly explain about a smell to you."

The potter, puzzled, looked at his ball of clay; and then gave it up as showing him no way out. So he tried thought.

"Egad!" he exclaimed, "now I think I can tell you. Yes, I think so. It smelled about halfway between a seagoing ship and a livery stable. The spray and fresh air blowing from the dams, and maybe the tar and oakum in the plank floor and the sun shining down on the timbers made it smell sort of shiplike. And the teams going through it for years and years made it smell like a horse. It smelt like Sherman's army, and it smelt like Barnum's circus, and it smelt like everything you could think of. Do you know what money smells like? Paper money, I mean."

"Yes."

"It smells like bein' *rich,* doesn't it? Well, the old bridge smelt like that. Though I don't mean bein' rich in money. It smelt like History. And it smelt like Home. Not like your mother's kitchen, but like your own city. It was noisy, too, and had a sound of its own; and even a blind man, if he was set down in it, would know he was in Zanesville."

He paused, as if to find whether this explanation was satisfactory. But David said nothing. Whereupon he continued—

"There are other places in the world like that; and they go by taste, too. I doubt you know that on some coasts a sailor will let down the lead to get a little sample of the bottom; and when the Captain puts it to his tongue he can taste what part of the ocean he is in. I mind readin' in a book about John Paul Jones getting his bearings like that at the time he was harryin' England. I can do it, too. Here

in Zanesville we import some clay to mix with our own; and it is not hard for me to tell the differ. I can taste Home in it too."

At this point the potter, having drunk a remnant of coffee from his tin pail, suddenly put on the cover. And then, noting that he had taken a few minutes too long for dinner, he rose and went to work. Taking up the same ball of clay that had served to illustrate his conversation, he slapped it on the whirling wheel; and it rose straightway up in the air and became a jug.

There being no opportunity for further investigation along this line, David took leave of the old potter and resumed his wanderings.

He had a new idea. A short distance down the river he had noticed a covered bridge of dark and ancient aspect; and now he bent his steps toward it. The reminiscences of the potter had made a deep impression on him; and while he was in the mood he thought he would make a test of his own powers of association. Possibly that old structure, redolent of the past, and holding in its one long, echoing hall a sort of memory of its own, might evoke like memories in himself. The speech of the potter, simple as were his words, had a charm of its own and left behind it a golden influence. In that old crucible of a skull, thinly thatched with gray, Time seemed to have come into its own. The earliest years and first fruits of his existence had ripened and mellowed and brought with them a second summer; and the simple words in which he expressed himself brought it all back with a vividness that was like old times made new. And David, his mind thus sensitized to impressions, felt new hope as he hurried down the river toward the old bridge.

Presently it came into view, its long line of warped shingles and weather-worn siding and vacant windows spanning the river on piers and making strange architecture between the

hills. He entered its single passage and began loitering about in its depths, hoping that he might be able to find himself somehow in this dwelling of the past.

He went out in this wooden tunnel to the very middle and stopped where he could look through one of the windows upon the smooth stretch of river or glance downward through a crack in the flooring and see the water breaking and brawling around a pier. Periodically he turned his attention upon its interior, viewing its dingy timbers and taking another sniff of its atmosphere.

Strange to say, he could no longer perceive anything distinctive in its odor. For a moment, upon entering its mouth, there had come to him a sense of its peculiar aroma; but this seemed to have flown and taken all promise of association with it. It was not open to such formal examination; the more he smelled the less he could distinguish. Certain odors that haunted his memory were far more redolent of other days than anything he could distinguish here. And to his eyes, this maze of old structural timbers brought nothing back. Before the reality, the old potter's poetry had taken flight. It was, after all, nothing but an old bridge with the fresh river breezes blowing through its windows and the water rushing angrily at its feet.

He took another sniff of its atmosphere, and, in the very act, a sense of revulsion came over him—a final revulsion toward the whole nature of his task. Here he was, trying to catch a clue out of the air; he had been reduced to a mere odor, a smell.

"Like a *hound*," he said, bitterly.

And with this reflection he saw that his had been a fool's errand. His clues, his little box of tricks, how piffling and puerile—How especially trifling when compared with the high and holy cause which had started him forth! What were they? A few childish memories that might have taken place anywhere. A flimsy piece of alphabetical detective

work that had in it nothing conclusive whatever. And now, in his desperation he had been reduced to this—a mere hunting by smell!

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. True enough, there had been moments of pleasure in the vistas that seemed opening before him; but the pleasure had always been turned to pain. Even his memorable morning in the cemetery had acted upon him in that way. Its magic surroundings, answering something within him, lulled him in sweet assurance—but only to give way to obstinate questionings to which he could find no answer. As for that record of trifles so carefully written down and carried about with him in France, he no longer looked with pleasure upon the black, waterproof volume. The dove and the tumble-bug were dead. He had little joy in contemplating it all. The tantalizing half memories, the continual promise ending always in disappointment and failure had worked more deeply upon him than he had been aware of. A host of tricky trifles had lured him on only to encompass his chagrin. It was, indeed, a fool's errand.

Upon getting this insight of his situation, he came to a quick, Chicagolike conclusion. He would buy a ticket, possibly that evening, and get back where he came from. He ought to be back at work. As the clue needed to be more definite than anything he had followed thus far, and as it evidently had to come out of his own mind, he could follow it up in Chicago as well as here. Even though he might have come from Zanesville, the place for him now was Chicago.

CHAPTER V

If anyone had now suggested to David that he change his mind about going back to Chicago, the suggestion would have received scant consideration. He would not even have entertained the suggestion if it had come from himself. He was not destined, however, to buy the railway ticket; and the changed course of affairs did not involve a change of mind. It was so far from it, in fact, that he could not possibly have foreseen the new element in his situation. And yet so far from it that he did not even know that the thing had occurred after it had happened to him. It is probably a good thing that the changed course did not come to him in the guise of a changing of his mind, or of following further any of the old clues. For in that case he would probably have bought the ticket at once. He usually knew how to make up his mind.

After he had come to his irrevocable conclusion on the bridge, he turned his back upon that ancient structure and made his way toward the center of the city. Back on Main street again with nothing whatever to do, he sat down a while on a settee in front of his hotel. This place, however, did not suit him very well; people were ceaselessly marching back and forth in front of him and he had an inclination toward wider spaces; so he got up and continued his wanderings.

Inevitably, and like any Man from Zanesville, he did not stop drifting till he came to the middle of the Y bridge. This seemed to suit him. He climbed up on the concrete balustrade which edges the open roadway across the water, and sat down to look at the scenery.

Here his eye found its particular interest in the green,

precipitous front of Putnam hill—Rufus Putnam, the brother of Israel. It is a unique promontory rising almost at the edge of Main street in the center of the city; and its power over the spectator is probably due to the fact that Nature here has the effect of thrusting her nose right into the middle of man's affairs. Its cityward side is so high and steep that it is likely that Israel Putnam himself could not have ridden down it on his charger. And so his brother Rufus, having the family penchant for declivities, and seeing that its front was a bulwark which would everlastingly withstand the encroachments of industry, bought it and left it as a legacy to the city.

Up on top of it, though he could not see it from his low situation, David knew there was a park. That park was a sort of aerial retreat; it got its quiet not by its distance out in the country but by its removal into the air. A unique idea, thought David. A park at the very edge of Main street, yet utterly removed from Main street. So utterly removed that a climb of a few minutes took one farther into the country, and into more wide, encompassing views, than most cities could furnish in an hour's ride. Another interesting feature of this strangely fascinating place!

Transverse of its front was another "dug road"—the route by which it was reached. Midway to the top, there was a hillside spring whose gush of live water glinted in the sun and emptied itself in a second silvery fall after it had crossed the road. This play of water became the object of David's chief attention.

Presently he saw a young couple up there getting a drink. A soldier and his girl! The soldier was still wearing the khaki, and the girl was gay in her summer finery. Although they were barely visible from where he sat, he could make out the khaki in contrast with the girlish dress. That they were lovers he could tell easily enough from the time they tarried at the spring and the number of things they did

which were unnecessary in getting a drink. After a while, when they had sufficiently trifled with the water and quite exhausted the resources of the spring, they continued the ascent, a gayly striped parasol now flashing into view and marking their line of march like a flag as they passed openings in the shrubbery.

David, his fancy turning toward the high solitude of the park, got down from his seat on the balustrade and retraced his steps across that arm of the bridge which led toward the hill. Up there was a place which met his present needs; a place where he could call his thoughts together and get his mind packed for the trip to Chicago.

By a devious route he found his way to the foot of the winding road and started upward. He, too, stopped at the spring and took a drink, and then tarried out of pure delight in seeing it pour water in such abundance from the living rock—a live liberality of drink with so much force behind it that it seemed to issue from the spout of some gigantic pump concealed in the heart of the hill. Being hot and thirsty, as most pedestrians are before they have reached the top, it struck him that the location of the spring in such a place had something of special thoughtfulness about it. Nature, having invited the travel upward, meets him half way and pours out a drink just when he is in condition to appreciate it! A peculiarly delightful country, thought David, as he filled his cup a second time. A hospitable, homelike sort of country! A country teeming with wealth and beauty, providing on every hand for the needs of its inhabitants! He *must* have been born in a country of hills. They appealed to him. And this particular hill appealed to him as a thing half remembered, dimly and deeply, back in "the golden age."

From the point he had now attained he could look down upon the river and into the interior of Main street; but when he looked up it seemed that he was still at the bot-

tom of a hill with a spring flowing from its foot. Again he filled his cup and took a drink, not so much because he was thirsty as that he liked the bland, limestone flavor and the live taste of it gushing and splashing from the rock. Then he turned and followed the route of the lovers to the top. And finally, having finished his climb by means of a rustic stairway, he emerged in the land of sky and outspread panorama.

Up here there were several green benches set around amid the shrubbery and natural nooks of the place; and there was one in particular which was so placed that it gave a commanding view of the river with its company of hills and brought the whole valley within scope of the eye. The park being confined to the flat summit of the hill, which connected by a receding spur with the highlands farther away from the river, was not large; and this smallness, together with its abrupt front and solid stand in the very midst of the city, gave it a charming sense of privacy and elevation.

Before sitting down, he advanced closer to the brow, and, with the instinct of a Chicagoan looking down into one of his metropolitan cañons, took a fuller view of Main street. Down there were no skyscrapers—just solid, conservative business blocks, four and five stories in height. It was very much as if Nature had put up a skyscraper of her own just off a choice location in the downtown district. And then the people had started a roof garden on top. This was Putnam park.

His lovers were nowhere in sight. He had rather hoped to see them again. He cast furtive glances around the rest of the benches and into all available cosy places, and was surprised to find that they were not there. Presently he saw that they had gone on, following a path which led down the more gradual slope at the back of the hill. He could see the flaglike parasol receding along the meandering route which led off toward a place of suburban residences.

Finding himself the sole possessor of the hill, he again turned his attention to the bench and whatever thoughts might now offer themselves.

The thought was not long in asserting itself. He had tried to get rid of it. But try as he might, the experience remained with him. He could still feel the soft, warm clasp of her hand. He was still looking into the clear depths of her eyes. He was still under the thrall of that fine encounter of spirits when she looked at him, almost worshipfully, as a *soldier.* And when he could keep up the looking no longer, and he dropped his eyes, it was only to rest his gaze on the full, soft modeling of her bosom. And all the while the thought that it might be she who was his *mother!*

He had done his best to hold himself like a soldier; and it had been a hard test. The only success he could now see in it was his success in playing a false part.

Mr. Tyler, the adept and finished man of business, had done his part well. He had contrived to let fall remarks that were definitely suggestive. Once he had even gone so far as to say that the young man with him might "almost be taken for an Orr." With this David felt a deeper and finer warmth in her attitude toward him. There was a still more solicitous appraisal of him in the dwelling glances of her eye. There was a deepening interest in him as a young man and a soldier—one of the boys who had gone over there and been *wounded.* But that was all. And when he departed, again feeling the soft, warm clasp of her hand, and receiving new assurances of her regard for a soldier, he felt that it had closed a chapter in his life.

It was a good thing, he now told himself, that he had gone so often to that cemetery to look at her, that he had become so familiar with her presence before meeting her face to face. If it had not been for that preliminary schooling he must have made a failure of it. His secret would have started from his breast.

That experience was a stone wall against which further effort seemed useless. Despite his inclinations, common sense told him to go back to Chicago.

Having thus again brought his mind to the sticking point, he settled back with the intention of devoting his mind to the scenery. But just as he stretched out his legs and laid his arm indolently along the back of the bench he heard voices behind him. He straightened up and looked around.

It was his lovers coming back. The gay parasol, which had hitherto been turned toward him, was now a mere background to girlish head and shoulders. Even at a distance, and in the slant rays of a reddening sun, she struck David as being beautiful. He expected they would take a turn in the path leading down toward the dug road; but instead they came straight on. They were going to share the hill with him and take in the view.

Her companion was an officer—a fact which David noted in the moment he could spare from looking at the young lady.

At first it seemed that they were going to take the view without becoming aware of his presence; in which case he felt that he would be an unprovidential eavesdropper and supernumerary. But just as they were passing, the Captain caught him up with the corner of his eye, and something like a salute passed between them. The young woman, noting the interchange, gave him a smile or a nod or simply a friendly glance, he could not tell which. But it was a fine feminine outgiving which seemed to welcome him and told him most certainly that he *belonged*.

Seemingly not at all discommoded by his presence, they advanced to the brow of the little plateau and turned their attention to things far off in the valley. The striped parasol now became a monopolist again, obtruding its self-centered circles upon his vision and allowing him only a view of her figure as she stood outlined against the sky. Even so, David

reflected, a man ought to know that she was beautiful. There was health and poise and smooth, abounding vitality in her every contour. And yet this physical completion was of a kind that expressed itself delicately and finely through the soft clinging drapery of her white dress. Her gracefulness was not of the fragile variety. A pair of smooth, sturdy ankles showed plainly enough that she was not of the languishing type of beauty. Nor was she yet fully settled down into womanhood. Rather it was a physical beauty whose touch of womanhood still had in it so much of the fresh physique of the little girl that one would easily imagine that her romping days had not quite been left behind her. A Roman sash, falling straight at her left, gave emphasis to the fine curves and balance of her figure, and led the eye, willy-nilly, down to the aforementioned sturdy ankles. And thence out of the picture by way of a saucy pair of patent leather heels. She filled David's eye to completion. And as she stood thus on the edge of the height, it was very much as if a vision of ethereal loveliness had come and taken her place before him to stand outlined against that blue background of the Infinite.

By strict attention to the conversation—for which listening-in David felt not the least compunction, inasmuch as her tones were so free and frank and musical, and so unconscious of anything to conceal—he finally learned that they were *not* lovers.

They were cousins! And her name was Maud!

They had a grandfather in common. And there was an amusing aunt in whose peccadilloes they had equal share of interest.

This knowledge gave David a distinct feeling of pleasure. Though why should he begrudge her a lover? And what possible interest could he have in the affairs of a young lady whom—as he was so soon going back to Chicago—he would probably never see again? These were questions which

David did not ask himself. And so he was not bothered with trying to find an answer.

Her face he had seen but for a moment. It was a moment, however, when her beauty, taking on a new access of loveliness, went out to him personally—a soldier. That beauty remained with him as a rare souvenir of experience—his own personal glimpse of it. He therefore had a great desire to see her again, more deliberately. He was anxious to give second consideration to what had so impressed him. And to take away with him, to Chicago, the picture in its entirety. For this reason, he kept a jealous eye on that parasol. It veered uncertainly to this side and that, but still kept her in eclipse. Finally, as they turned their attention to a new part of the horizon, the parasol shifted around—so far around that it became a mere last quarter of a parasol—and her face was fully revealed.

David, who had expected to account somehow for her effect upon him, could only reflect that she beautiful. And her name was Maud! He was conscious, too, that she was not merely beautiful; but she was especially and peculiarly beautiful to *him.*

If there is anything in love at first sight (and we shall believe that there is) the effect is easily accounted for. If not, it is a thing which later events will have to explain. To David, when he looked back and tried to analyze, it seemed that he had seen her *before.* There was recognition somewhere; and like this hill, which he might have known from the very beginning of things, she seemed to come to him as out of the golden age. He was surprised when she came; not as at a beauty strange and new, but a kind that was intimate and fulfilling, as if the vision had sprung from within him and not from without. It is an effect often achieved over us by great works of art—this feeling that they must always and necessarily have existed. They content us so fully that they seem but the fulfillment of what

we have long expected, an ancient longing come forth before our eyes.

To David, however, this vision was more than a work of art. And having so little cause, at that moment, to question or analyze, he simply sat and enjoyed her, giving way to a complete sense of what was before him. One thing he was conscious of almost to the point of skepticism; and that was her complexion. At first he thought this perfect coloring might be some momentary effect, probably due to the light falling upon her face through a pink stripe of her parasol; anyway it could not have been painted; it was composed of radiance and not pigment. And then as she turned round and the parasol eliminated itself from the problem he saw that it was life and not light; it was the way her cheeks responded to exercise and sociability, and especially the long climb up Putnam hill.

When Cousin Will had been shown all the kingdoms of the earth (the lone soldier in the background feeling as if he, too, had been led up into a mountain to be tempted) and various widespread friends and relatives had been recalled and disposed of, their business on the heights came to an end. The parasol, no longer needed, closed up, and they turned about to continue their stroll to the lower level. As they passed him, David was again awarded a look that was somewhat short of formal recognition.

As their heads sank out of sight on the path leading down to the dug road, and her voice became lost to him, David went forward to the edge and stood on the spot she had so lately been occupying. Here the musical tones came up to him again. He noted that they stopped a while on the way down. The clink of a tin-cup and a merry remark told him that they were again taking liberties with the spring. Then they went on again, and David stood listening till her voice grew faint and was finally lost in the murmur of the dam.

All this, together with the mental preparation toward tak-

ing the train to Chicago, had consumed much time. The sun was now shining almost level with the top of the hill; it was already making preparation, amid a pile of western clouds, for a glorious exit from the scene. It occurred to David that it was time to go down to dinner. And then, feeling more at home on top of his sixteen-story hill than he did at his hotel, he decided not to go. He did not feel hungry.

As he again took his seat on the bench a bell began ringing in the distance, a measured swing of melody filling the air of the now darkening valley and making an omnipresent music amid the hills. As it tolled its way into his consciousness, David began to feel that there was something he had forgotten—rather there was something in connection with this bell and this scene which he ought to remember. What was it? It seemed to him, almost, as if he had been here *before*. This very moment had existed at some other time in his experience, a golden moment with all this attendant circumstance of sinking sun and distant melody; and it had some prophetic meaning. The bell kept saying it, whatever it was, a veritable voice of evening falling with soothing insistence upon the countryside and dispensing abroad its thoughts of harmony and peace. But to him it was saying something different; something fateful and sad which was going to follow this moment just as certainly as it had followed when all this had happened *before*. So definite and deep was this impression, and so tacitly did each stroke of the bell find a responsive chord within him, that he was puzzled to account for such effects upon the human mind. The prophetic quality of the moment was such that he felt as if he had been caught up in some great and well-planned coincidence of things, and that it had happened in this way so that he could remember and take warning. What was it?

Then suddenly he remembered, and the whole mystery came loose. This was the country—the hill of Lorena! It

was the hill of the disappointed lovers! These were the very sunset slopes and this the very bell which had ushered in the tragedy and brought forth the song—

A hundred months!—'t was flowery May
When up the hilly slope we climbed
To watch the dying of the day
And hear the distant church bells chimed.

As the words came back to him, his mind was occupied with two sides of a pleasant and yet incongruous picture; on the one side were the lovers as they sat here at evening, and on the other a blind man with his face lifted toward the ceiling as he sang and told their story in a Morgan street boarding house.

As David recalled the next stanza, repeating it slowly, the bell began swinging in time with the words, and the two fell in so naturally together that the poem might have been written to fit the music of the bell—

We loved each other then, Lorena,
More than we ever dared to tell;
And what we might have been, Lorena,
Had but our loving prospered well!
But then 't is past, the years are gone,
I'll not call up their shadowy forms;
I'll say to them, "Lost years, sleep on!
Sleep on; nor heed Life's pelting storms."

As he came to the end of the stanza he paused and sat listening to the bell. And as he listened the musical tongue seemed to take up the threnody where he left off, reiterating with solemn sweetness—

I'll say to them, "Lost years sleep on!
Sleep on; nor heed Life's pelting storms."

David repeated no more, but sat listening to the bell. There was a message of youth in its ring—as if it were still a young bell with no hint of sorrow or disappointment in what it had to say. But despite this cheerful overtone in its song, David could not, in the mood he was in, help

hearing that it was an old bell—an old, old bell. Its deeper reverberation, like a solemn bass to its true ring, had in it memories of the past, of time and change and long-forgotten tragedy; and these it treasured up and sang about and solemnly proclaimed each evening when the sun went down. It was indeed an old, old bell. A bell of the bygone years.

It was the selfsame bell (so he could not help reflecting) that had sounded in the lovers' ears as they sat here in the evening and plighted their faith to one another. It was the same voice that had seemed to them so full of sweet assurance and promise for the future; and these were the same verdant slopes and the same golden sun in the west. And here, instead of the happy lovers, was himself. And the bell, as if the same moment had again been brought to pass, was ringing away and addressing itself to him!

Pondering thus, the sad experience of the disappointed lover became very real to him. He knew now how the young minister had felt. It was much more real to him than when, as a casual listener, he had heard about it in Mrs. Bradlaw's boarding house.

In this new access of understanding, he recalled the details of Vose's story. The song had been written *several years* after the young woman had felt forced to say him nay. And when the words and music came out the whole country responded. Everyone, everywhere, understood the sentiment. The South, regardless of its northern origin, was especially fond of it. It was sung by soldiers on horseback to shorten the journey; it served to keep up the spirits of tired infantry on many a long moonlit march. It was really a soldier's song. David could now see it very plainly. And for years it did not die.

And what, thought David (his mind turning curiously to a more intimate view of the matter)—what did Lorena think afterwards? What were *her* feelings when she found

that, after a "hundred months" had passed, the man still loved her and was unable to forget her? What did she think during the years the whole world was singing about her, and during the years that followed?

Unfortunately she had never said. She was married to the Judge.

David himself could not furnish an answer. When he tried to enter the heart of a woman and imagine what might take place there he found himself baffled.

But as for the *man's* part in such a case, he was in no predicament of mind whatever. The woman was beautiful. He had found her to be beautiful in every way. He had fallen in love with her girlhood and had received her love in return. For a while she had been his. And having once loved her, he could no more forget her than he could forget himself. What a man experiences has become part of his possessions; it must remain a part of his life. David could see that the man would not only continue to love Lorena, but that his love might grow stronger and finer as time went on. Having lost her she would become a cherished ideal, a vision which never grows old. And as time passed, instead of forgetting her, he would become more conscious of the "lost years"—the years that had not been spent in her company.

"Lost years," reflected David. He could understand that. The song seemed to touch his *own* case a little just at that point. A man, for instance, has lost much who has never known his mother! There was no telling how many lost hours and minutes his own twenty-odd years represented in that regard; how many memorable and beautiful experiences such as are intended to go with a man to the end of his days! But for him there had been no such things to look back to. He had lost her even before he had known her.

The big voice in the valley kept on singing about the "lost years"—those two lines seemed to have found lodgment in the mind of the bell, and it repeated them over and over.

Finally the bell stopped. Its last note went reverberating farther and farther away as if it were vanishing down the river. And then David sat for a long while thinking of nothing in particular; but of something in general that seemed to be very beautiful.

More and more the thing that was beautiful took on the form and features of Maud. Maud!—yes, that was the name. This struck him as a coincidence. He had always fancied the name Maud. He seemed to have been born with a special liking for it. Some people, of course, would not think it a very beautiful name. To them there would seem to be no music or meaning in it. But there was no doubt that it *could* be a very beautiful name. And she had been beautiful, too, standing there against the blue sky in her white dress with the Roman sash falling straight at her left side and the knotted fringe at the bottom. Her voice was musical; it had made a deep appeal to him. And then her face when the parasol went aside and she turned partly round.

Her hair, now that he recalled that particular part of her beauty, was a soft, golden brown. It was warm and sunny and cheerful like her voice—everything about her was warm and sunny. The sash, where it begirt her waist (which he had seen mostly from the back) set off that part of her in a way that made him think of the back of a little girl—the sturdy, mobile back of a little girl, but none the less graceful. But maybe it was the sash that made him think of her as a little girl. Her gracefulness was the kind that goes with health and strength, translating it into beauty; it was warm and vital and yet exquisitely refined. The sash, for some reason, seemed indispensable to her. To David it seemed a necessary part of her, like her name. And her name was Maud!

David had now lost all inclination to go "down to dinner." Putnam hill, on a summer evening, and especially a summer

evening when such influences as these are abroad, easily prevails upon you to stay awhile. David, enjoying the coolness and quiet of his airy plateau, settled down comfortably in his seat, conscious that there was no hurry. And after a while, to be still more comfortable, he stretched out at full length on the bench, resting his head on the wooden arm and pulling his hat forward at the old careless cant.

He was the more inclined to linger in this pleasant place because this was his last day in Zanesville. Tomorrow he would be on his way to Chicago. That trip to Chicago continued to occupy the outer edges of his mind quite as definitely as if the ticket were stuck in his hat. And mingling with it were thoughts of the Lorena of long ago, of the gentle-voiced woman who walked in the garden and might have been his mother, and, at the same time, of the girl whose name was Maud.

To this vein of dreaming, the dams set a murmurous music, the two of them singing their song in company. Occasionally a rumor of Main street came up to him, barely surmounting the voice of the river. In this humdrum of silence, a silence which still had something in it of the busy, workaday world, he began to be soothed and blissfully indolent. At times his mind would cast loose from the world and go off on long journeys, yet all the while he had a comforting sense of being in the very heart of things—he was up on Putnam hill. He was up here with Lorena. And his mother. And Maud.

His hat lost its balance and fell off. But he did not know it—or else he did not care.

He was now on the borderland of that country where logic is unknown, where thought is free to do as it pleases. The three women that he had been thinking about began now to merge and come together into a sort of composite person; they were separate and yet united; a beautiful presence in which Maud was Mother and Mother was Maud,

and yet all of them were Lorena. His mind did not, of course, resent this strange confusion. This woman was no stranger to him; he had known her too long, and he had seen her do too many beautiful things. It was she who nursed soldiers in hospitals, and had put men to sleep since the beginning of time; she was as old as history, as young as yesterday, and always beautiful.

A stray breeze from down river came along and flopped the hat over, laying it up against a leg of the bench. There it balanced a while, waiting to see what the next breeze would do with it. David was breathing heavily. Being long inured to sleeping out of doors, it is safe to say that no mere breeze would disturb him. A thunderstorm might do it—providing he did not get to dreaming it was a cannon.

CHAPTER VI

Some time after daylight David began to be aware of himself again, and after much determined batting of his eyes and some rebellious thrashing about he sat up and looked about him. He seemed surprised to find that the hill was still there. Also that the dams were still running, and that the sun, bearing much of the same florid aspect that it had when he saw it last, was now in the east instead of the west. From impressions he had gathered in the past nine hours it would have been more in accordance with his expectations if he had waked somewhere in Heaven or in Chicago.

David, as Mrs. Midgely had often observed, was a "hard waker." Being now on his feet he went vigorously at the work of pulling himself together. He stood on the top of the hill and stretched, and having found his hat and put it on, and kicked his legs out till his trousers were hanging right, he stood a while thinking. Then he proceeded to the identical spot that had been occupied by his apparition of the night before and looked off upon the world at large.

The morning, "on golden hinges turning," was letting forth a whole flood of light upon the valley. A long procession of light waves seemed to come dancing up the Muskingum. It was a setting of the heavens which, if his angel of the Roman sash had still been on her promontory to benefit by it, would have fitted her state of being exactly. It was much more suited to her than the mood of sunset and declining day. For after all, he now reflected, that apparition was *not* Lorena. Her name was Maud.

His next thought was of breakfast—a step which he did not usually come at without liberal applications of water.

The spring again presented itself as among the conveniences of the hill—a hill not only good to sleep on but having its own system of plumbing—and when he had washed up and drunk a tin cupful and dried himself on his handkerchief, he continued down the dug road on his way to earth again. He had already looked over the menu in his mind and decided that he would have bacon and eggs with waffles.

At the hotel, the breakfast of bacon and eggs with an extra order of waffles and a second cup of coffee completed the process of waking up. And now for the depot and a ticket to Chicago. He settled his account with the clerk (no mention being made of the night he slept upon the hill), checked out and took up his grip.

For him there were no farewells to make. His peculiar mission in Zanesville had brought him into contact with the place and the people more than with persons. Excepting, of course, Mr. Tyler. It would hardly do to disappear and say no word to him. Morning was not the hour that Mr. Tyler had designated as being open to calls, but circumstances alter cases; and besides, any business man would have time for a call so short as he intended to make.

It was as yet too early for Mr. Tyler to be expected at his office; but David put his grip back in the check room and started out. He could spend the interim walking about and taking a last look at things.

He was in very good spirits this morning, wonderfully buoyant and cheered up and inwardly uplifted; and there was a promise in the world after all, even though he did not know very definitely what it was. His mood was very appreciative of things in general; and in casting about for a fit place to fill in the time he again drifted, inevitably, to the center of the Y bridge. Again he climbed upon the balustrade and settled down to fix the place upon his mind and take a farewell look at the hill of Lorena.

He had not long given himself over to it when it began

to have the same peculiar and insistent effect upon him that it had before. It was an effect he was at a loss to account for; but which, upon closer thought, he began to suspect.

The three arms of the Y, straddling the junction of the rivers, throw their big, solid arches out to the middle and come together in an open, concrete plaza—a sort of monumental meeting place at the marriage of the waters. The bridge itself, with its massive, smooth roadway, is but a junction of land routes at the middle of the river, a flowing of the land across the water; and from its situation with regard to the meeting rivers it is, in fact, a junction upon a junction. It is a meeting place of man and nature, and the whole effect of this is a strong sense of centrality. And a man standing on this concrete plaza and looking about him feels that he has arrived. The rivers have arrived here; the roads have arrived here; even the hills have arrived here. And so has he. The waters, leading away in three directions, look toward it. The three parts of the city look out toward it. The roads come out to it. And Putnam hill, especially, thrusting its scenic wedge right into the heart of the city, looks down upon it. It is very much as if the surrounding highlands, wishing to be creditably represented at this meeting place of art and nature, had selected this promontory and put it forth as their noblest specimen of an Ohio hill.

This centrality of things gives a man a feeling of being very much at home. There is nowhere else to go; nothing calls him on. He is expected to stop a while. Everything looks toward him, as if all existed for his entertainment and benefit, and to extend him a personal welcome.

David, in the clear air of the morning, and with the new feeling of elation which had taken possession of him, could not but feel this familiar welcome as he came out to the middle of the bridge. He stayed there quite a while, looking

with a new eye upon the glassy bend of the waters where the rivers curve over the brims of their dams. He felt a new pleasure in following them as they broke, white and tumultuous, and rushed eagerly to their meeting place in the common channel. And all the while he was listening with new appreciation to the deeper music of their roar—a duet of dams celebrating the meeting of their waters at this historic highway.

Was ever a city so beautiful! Was ever a city so charmingly ensconsed, so predestinately placed! The more he contemplated the peculiar *ensemble* the more it impressed him—the roads, the rivers, the hills, everything. But more particularly that hill which he knew so well—Rufus Putnam's hill—Lorena's hill. Or rather Maud's hill. He wished, after all, that he were not going to leave it. He wished he might have been born here. And again there came over him the conviction that he *was*.

He made short work of clearing this delusion out of his brain. This place would naturally appeal to *anybody*. It was a work of art in the form of nature; and it took hold of a man in that way. It was calculated to do so. He had heard that even the early homeseekers, driving westward over the National Road, would be struck by something intimate and homelike in the scene and pause to enjoy it. It caught the fancy of the homeseeker. In that case, how much more strongly it might be able to exert its power over him, who was not only a homeseeker but *lost!* He would have to get this stuff out of his head for good and all. The thing for him to do was to pay his regards to Mr. Tyler, and then get his ticket to Chicago.

Mr. Tyler was in when he called. And while he was ostensibly engaged in opening the morning's mail, Mr. Tyler had plenty of time. He seemed to approve of David's dropping the problem and leaving it to future developments. But

instead of cutting their visit short when David held out his hand for a farewell shake, he reserved time for a little questioning.

"I suppose," he began, "that you have been all over Zanesville? Seen everything pretty well, have you?"

"Oh, yes. I've been all over."

"Went into all the details?"

"Yes. I suppose I've seen more than some people who live here."

"Ever been over in that part?" Mr. Tyler rose from his chair and indicated the locality on a large lithographic picture entitled Panoramic View.

"Yes, I was over there. I've seen the whole town."

"Then," said Mr. Tyler, somewhat quizzically, "you did not recognize the place where Gilbert Orr was born?"

"In Zanesville! I thought he was born over there in Abram."

"No. He was born here in Zanesville."

"Where?"

"Right there on that corner. The house is still there." Mr. Tyler placed a finger on the particular house in the lithograph, half map and half picture. After which he went back to his chair at the desk.

"Mr. Tyler," said David, "why did you not tell me this before?"

"Have you any difficulty in seeing why? A man comes in here, let us say, and claims that he remembers a certain house. How are we going to know that he really does? How is he going to prove it to all concerned?"

"I see," said David. "Anybody could claim to remember a house. And he could describe it after he had looked at it. You mean to say that his only means of proof would be by his knowing it when he saw it—identifying it without help."

"Yes. You have been through that part of town and did not know the place when you saw it. You may have

forgotten it—I do not know. But I gave you every chance to find yourself. And I thought I would tell you about it before you left."

"I am going over there," said David. "I'll go over there right now. If I recognize the place I shall be able to prove to *myself* who I am—even if I *can't* prove it to anybody else. If you do not see me again you will know I have gone to Chicago."

"Very well," said Mr. Tyler.

On this tentative basis they shook hands.

When the door had closed, Mr. Tyler made a few additions to his thoughts. A shrewd speculation had occurred to him. The house was no longer in its old setting. The large grounds had been cut down and sold off in lots, and the house had been moved over a distance. The stable was no longer there, and the row of honey-locusts was gone. And that high corner at the back, which had given the lot its one individual feature, had been graded down. Even the authentic Gilbert Orr, if he were to come back with a complete set of childhood memories, would hardly be able to recognize the place. Now this present young man was honest; Mr. Tyler had become assured of that. But he was probably deluded. And so, if he were to come back imagining that he recognized the place it would be a good way to rob him of his delusions.

David, unaware of this state of affairs, took his grip back to the hotel and proceeded straightway to the corner pointed out on the map.

There was nothing about the place which appealed to his memory. Viewing it from that side of the grounds to which it had its face turned (the grounds themselves occupying the corner impartially and having entrances on both streets) he thought there was a sort of familiarity about the countenance of the house. There, for instance, were charming, old-fashioned side-lights on each side of the front door. But

side-lights always *do* make a door look hospitable and familiar. In general, the house was of a common enough style of architecture.

David now went round to the side, thinking that the back yard, being more in a small boy's line, might contain something memorable. Here all was as conventional, as utterly usual, as before.

However, in the middle of the picket fence which ran along this part of the frontage there was a small gate with white, square posts; and on top of each of these posts, which were carefully carpentered in monumental style with entablature and mouldings, was a large, white ball.

Here David's mind began to conduct itself strangely. It seemed that he *knew* that post and that ball. He knew it as if it were a person—a wooden personage, indeed, with wooden neck and shoulders topped by a wooden head! That ball and post to the left—and why should one attract him more than the other?—seemed to be the one that he was especially acquainted with. Its whole personage, with pediment and paneled front and entablature, stood before him with the air of an old friend who is in momentary expectation of being recognized. And just as such an old friend, whose name and former connection you cannot for the life of you recall, will stand before you in this same wooden way—aggravatingly non-committal and sphinx-like and taking joy in your discomfiture while you sweat inwardly and try to do the guessing—this post seemed to take on an air and say, "Why don't you know me! Now think."

Yes, he did know that wooden-headed fence post, or one that used to look just like it. It affected him pleasantly; there was happiness connected with it; it was associated somehow with the golden era in his life. That left post he knew; the other was just its twin. But what they had ever done together was a conundrum, and there was nothing about its expression to help him. If there is anything utterly de-

void of architectural feature, it is a white, wooden ball. And this post, looking more and more like a human image, but having a head with neither countenance nor feature nor even a front and back, was a hard one to solve. He stood with his eyes riveted to that white sphere as if it were a universe in little, the remains of a world that he had forgotten; or like a crystal gazer expecting at any moment to see the future and the past depicting themselves within its form. What pleasant experience was it that had come to be signalized in his mind by a white, wooden ball?

Suddenly he threw the gate open and stepped into the yard. He turned his attention to the back of the post—to the box under the ball which formed its square shoulders. The panel from this sub-division of the post was missing. He thrust his hand in and pulled forth several wisps of black horsehair.

It was his nest, his bird, his post! Many times, that summer, he had climbed up and looked into the dark interior of this box-like place! It was because that panel was missing!

With the wisps of horsehair clutched firmly in his hand —he would not have parted with them for the world—he walked up and down, agitatedly, in front of the place. He was thinking hard, trying to add something else to this vestige of the past. As nothing seemed to add itself, he stopped and fell to contemplating the horsehair itself, holding it in his hand and thinking of it as *evidence*. And as he did so there came back to him—with a weight of meaning which he had not attached to the argument at the time—certain logic which Mr. Tyler had impressed upon him. Mr. Tyler had gone into it quite thoroughly when they were coming back to Zanesville after the visit to Mrs. Orr.

He had said—

"Your mother and you have got to come together on mutual memories. No other way will do. And that way is

almost impossible. The boy of three or four years has got to meet the mind of the grown woman—has got to remember things that *she* remembers and talk them over with her in such a way that there can be no mistake. Otherwise she cannot know. The mind of the infant and the mind of the adult have got to meet on a common ground. They have got to exchange memories of things which struck both of them at the time, and which both of them have preserved. Now that is hardly possible. Take your tumble-bug, for instance. How would your mother ever know, twenty years afterwards, that at a certain moment in your life you were down on your knees in the road watching a certain tumble-bug? And that it made such an impression on you? I thought there was some hope in that Z. But when I sounded her mind I found she had no knowledge that her son was shown a Z on a stove. At some moment in his life, some girl took a poker and tried to teach him a Z on a stove. He got into such a predicament between the Z and the N that he never quite forgot that moment. But how is your mother, who never was aware of that inner experience, going to identify you by it when you tell her that? There are other stoves with Z on them, other mothers and other children. It cannot be done. The child and the adult live in different worlds. They are impressed by different things and remember different things; and what the child remembers is an inner experience. Outwardly, it would be a mere trifle that a grown person would hardly think of twice. Another thing. The things that a mother remembers about her child are what it says and does—usually funny things for the reason that its conceptions and points of view are such a surprise, so little understood. But a child does not cherish in its memory the things it has *said*. It forgets all its first three or four years entirely except for certain inner experiences. These are hardly explainable to others; the others do not know them. So there you have the problem of a

boy of three or four trying to prove to a woman that she is his mother! He has got to meet her on mutual mental grounds. It can hardly be done; the infant and the adult cannot come in contact. But we must go farther than that. As you say, you and your mother will have to *know* that you are so related. No theory or uncertain evidence will do. Well then, you have got to be able to talk to one another about things you both know and which no one else but you and she know, or *could* know. Otherwise the proof is not positive. Too many outer things enter. And that, I say, can hardly be done."

As David stood contemplating the horsehair, this logic came back to him with new weight of meaning. This was his bird's nest, his bird, his post. And his Mother! He had no doubt of that; he felt certain. Well then? What should he do about it? Hurry over and say to her, "I am your son. I remember that a bird had its nest in the post—the post where the panel was off."

Hardly. Even an impostor could note that missing panel and the bird's nest and claim to remember it. Or there might be a mistake; a coincidence was possible. There were lots of white posts. And as this fact stared him in the face, the ancient wisps of horsehair seemed to crumble to dust in his hand.

Utterly baffled again he went back to that wooden personage, the post. He passed his hand over the familiar white surface of the ball and stood gazing at it somewhat after the manner of Hamlet with the skull. That wooden man—he must have thought of it in that light in his childhood—was his only friend, his only real acquaintance in these parts. He was certain that he had found his home; the post had given him the information. And he regarded its bald head with a look of fondness, as if he were thinking "Wise old post."

He went inside and took another look at the dark interior

of the boxlike place at the back. And then, along with box and nest and post, something came back to him. Not suddenly, and with an ease that could hardly be called thought, the memory returned. There was a little girl. The bird and the nest belonged to them. It was theirs alone—their secret nest. The dark place was higher than their heads; and one day he clasped her round her middle and lifted her up to look into it. She was very beautiful. He could see her now; she seemed to be a sort of angel. She had beautiful golden hair and golden feet—shiny golden feet. The golden feet, he reflected, must have been bronzed shoes. And she had a white dress with a pink sash. These things were as plain as day; just that vision and the moment he had her in his arms, hugging her pink-sashed stomach and lifting with all his might while she looked in at the nest.

Again it was the recalling of a memorable moment. Even now he could feel her warm form pressing against him as he held her up. And something of pride in his own manly strength as he did so!

There was nothing more in a visual way. But there was something more inwardly. He remembered his feelings toward her. As she now came back to him there was such a warmth of friendship, such a resurgence of old affection, that it put him in a state of bliss to think of it. Not with regard to anything in particular, but just with regard to *her*. It amounted to the memory of a lifelong association. He must have known her a long, long time. As for the things they did together in that time of beautiful association, he could not remember. Just now they did not seem to come back to him. These had faded away, but they had left *her* as bright as ever. And especially that proud and wonderful moment. He felt as if he were again lifting her up to look into that dark, mysterious place—the beautiful creature with the golden feet.

Where was this girl now? Would it be possible to find

her? Maybe here would be the way to put Mr. Tyler's logic to rout. It was his last hope.

He stationed himself at the corner with an eye to the first likely wayfarer. Presently a well-groomed old gentleman, whose white beard and gold-headed cane recommended him as an authority on ancient history, was accosted.

"I am trying to find," said David, "a family that used to live near here about twenty years go. I think it was down this street here. They had a little girl with golden hair. Do you remember a family with such a little girl?"

"There have been quite a lot of little girls raised down that way," answered the old gentleman.

"But this was about twenty years ago," insisted David. "And the little girl wore bronze shoes and had golden hair."

"Maybe you mean Doctor Thomas. And Maud Thomas. They lived in that brick house down there?"

"Maud!" exclaimed David.

"Yes. Doctor Thomas's little girl. She lived down there."

"Excuse me, but did you say *Maud?*" asked David.

"Didn't you say Maud?" inquired the old gentleman, putting his hand to his ear.

As a matter of fact, David did not know whether he had been the first to say it or not. That name had been floating around in his consciousness as the only one that seemed to belong to the angel with the golden shoes. He had thought of it quite definitely, but being conscious that this mental Maud of his might owe her genesis to the Maud of Putnam hill, and being therefore suspicious of getting his angels mixed, this present Maud (he was becoming sadly tangled in his mind) seemed like taking a step too far.

"Yes, it *was* Maud," he said suddenly. "Her name was Maud. Does she live down there now?"

"The Thomases moved some years ago, a little while after Mrs. Thomas died. Doctor Thomas has been trying to give

up his practice. So he has a country place down the river. The Lookout he calls it."

"And can I find the Doctor down there now? And his daughter? It is she I want to see."

"Yes, he is down there now, I guess. But if you want to see Maud Thomas you wouldn't have to go down there. I see by the *News* that she is visiting the Howards over on the Terrace."

The Howards of the Terrace, David next learned, were so well known that specific directions for finding them were hardly necessary. The Howards could be taken for granted. "Anybody" could show him, after he got over on the Terrace, where the place was. And with this sufficient information the gold-headed cane and the white beard passed on.

David needed a few moments in which to determine his exact whereabouts in this new state of affairs. Here were three Mauds—possibly. Or at least two. There was his little Maud, the Maud of Putnam hill, and this other Maud who might be either of them or some other Maud. He could only wonder which Maud he was about to call on. And then as a car came along he boarded it and went toward the Terrace. His path in life, whether it proved to be a by-path or not, now led straight to this Maud.

On the car, his little Maud came back to him with more clarity, more insistence, and a heart that kept warming up to him. Visually he did not recover more details. There were the golden shoes and golden hair with the white dress and pink sash, and that was enough. All else had flown and left behind it only a sense of her angelic nature. They must have been very intimate and had wonderful days together. The very thought of her charmed and soothed him and set the harp-strings humming. He could hardly say that he had loved her—that would be too ridiculous. But sometime, long ago, she had been his lovely idol.

Neither can philosophy answer the question as to whether

he loved her—even though his great momentary memory was of a time when he had his arms around her. But if such sexless, timeless cherubs, recently arrived from Heaven, may be said to have some affinity for one another, and if their fond preference and pairing off (as if they had known one another from the time on the other side of life) may be called love, then that would be as good a name for it as any other. And certainly the purity and depth of affection with which he now recalled her would hardly disqualify him as a lover.

CHAPTER VII

The Howard place, set on its carpetlike lawn amid trim shrubbery and flowering urns, was a residence so well-kept that one might say it bore little mark of ever having been out-of-doors. It had the effect of a piece of furniture, especially in regard to its polished windows.

The maid who answered his ring informed him that Miss Thomas was out. But she would be back before long, and if Mr. Mann wished he could come in and wait for her. David did so; and spent a silent time in the reserved atmosphere of a large drawing room. The nature of his errand was one that was well calculated to make him feel ill at ease; so that the very furniture, sitting in silent conclave, presided over by a grand piano, seemed to be staring at him and wondering whether he had good reason for being there. He could not say that he had. In fact, he had come to call on a young lady simply because her name was Maud. And because he, who did not know who he was, had a fancy for that name. And on that basis he was to meet the young lady and conduct an inquisition into her infancy.

It struck him that he might have done better, after all, to see her father, the Doctor; especially as the doctor of a neighborhood is an authority on the children thereabouts as well as being the natural person for *anybody* to see. But in the present instance, of course, the doctor's daughter being nearest at hand—Well, there was a good color of excuse for him. And so, when she came, some such presentation of his case—

At this point of the dilemma, the young lady herself came tripping up the stone steps and passed into the hall. And

David saw, to his considerable surprise, that he had been following up his Maud of Putnam hill!

She had on a different dress—now it was a vision in pink gingham instead of white. But though his angel had changed her feathers since he saw her on Putnam hill, her more colorful appearance was none the less ravishing.

After some negotiation in another room, during which he noticed that her musical voice suddenly dropped in tone and became almost inaudible, she appeared before him in an archway. There she stood a moment as David rose and made obeisance—a bow that came very near being a salute. Whereupon she sat down smiling; and then acknowledged her identity as her caller explained that he was looking for "the daughter of Doctor Thomas."

"I may owe you an apology for this call, Miss Thomas," began David. "But the nature of my business is such that I cannot tell, until I have had a talk with you, whether I do or not. My name is David Mann. I came here from Chicago. I have been in town a week now; and during that time I have had several conferences with Mr. Tyler."

"Oh, yes. Mr. Tyler."

"We have been trying, between us, to solve a problem. It is a rather difficult problem in personal identity."

"Yes."

"You know such a problem can sometimes be very difficult to solve."

"Yes indeed. I understand such cases. Lost identity."

Miss Thomas's attention had been centering more and more on the scar across his brow, and knowing him to be her soldier of the night before, this badge of battle immediately interpreted itself to her sympathetic understanding. "Poor fellow," she thought. "A head wound. Cerebral trouble." As a doctor's daughter, and one whose father had found himself able to drop his practice only in theory, it was natural for her to be somewhat technically interested.

"But not the sort of lost identity that you mean," continued David. "Not a loss of mind, but the actual loss of one's self—of one's mother. Nothing abnormal, but such as might happen to any normal person. The case is one that depends entirely upon childhood memories. That is, you understand, the person has grown up and cannot make himself known to his mother in any other way. And the few things he remembers—child memories—are of such a nature that it would require the mind of another child, a playmate, to corroborate them."

"Not a head wound? Not a loss of memory?"

"No. Nothing abnormal. I am afraid you may find that it is a case of *too much* memory. If I am correctly informed, you spent your childhood in the neighborhood of Gilbert Orr, the boy who was lost."

"Oh, yes. I knew him."

"And you still remember him?"

"Yes; quite well. We were playmates."

"And do you still remember things that he did—that you two did together?"

"Some things. I was rather small then; but on account of the sensation caused by his disappearance, and my hearing so much talk about it, I kept looking back and thinking about him. He was my playmate. But the things I remember are not the things we did together so much as just *himself*. I remember learning that he was lost. And for a long time I kept waiting for him to come back."

David had been thrashing round mentally for a line of approach from which he could gracefully retire in case he saw that he had made a mistake. He did not wish to have to apologize for starting an unwarranted sensation. But now he was impatient of delay. He plunged at once to the point of the matter.

"At the side of the Orr place there is a gate with white balls on the posts. Do you remember that gate in connection with him?"

"Yes. I always went up to his place to play. He seldom came to see me."

"There is a board or panel missing near the top of one of these posts at the back. And there was a little bird built in there one summer. Do you remember that bird?"

"Oh, yes. A little yellow bird. That was our bird."

"A bird with a horsehair nest?"

"Yes. It was black horsehair."

"Do you remember how you used to look into that place? Did he ever put his arm around you and give you a boost?"

"Why——!"

This reply was something between a *why* and a gasp. David, not knowing whether her surprise was favorable or unfavorable, continued more particularly.

"You were not then tall enough to see into that place. What I am trying to find out is whether you have any remembrance of the little boy taking hold of you—standing behind you and taking hold of you tight so that he could lift you up to see."

"Why yes. But how did *you* know that?"

"I remembered it," said David. "This morning I went to the place and I saw the gate. I looked at the white ball on the post. Then I remembered the nest. And then I remembered the little girl. And when she came back to me I had my arms around her and was lifting her up to see. And the only name I could think of was Maud. Maudie. That's why I came to see you."

"Are you Gilly Orr?"

"I am if you are that Maudie."

By this time Miss Thomas had come to her feet. She had risen suddenly as if to go toward him; then she held

back and remained standing. David also made a move as if to rise and go to her; but he thought better of it and kept his seat.

"Why Gilly Orr!" she exclaimed. "And you remembered *me!*"

"Yes. I remembered a little girl with golden shoes. Beautiful bronze shoes. And a white dress with a wide pink sash. And beautiful golden hair."

David's "Maudie" suddenly took on a new access of beauty. The color mounted to her cheeks, candidly displaying the emotions that had taken possession of her; her whole being seemed to become surcharged with friendship as she stood feasting her eyes upon him. It was as if she had instantly sprung into bloom before him, answering the influence of their golden days. And David became conscious that he was being completely and utterly *looked at.* He had never been quite so utterly looked at in his life—at least not by a young woman. It was the clear, candid gaze of a little girl, a perfectly self-unconscious little girl with nothing in the world to conceal. And yet she was a young woman, graceful, lovely and complete! And as she thus stood looking at him, he could feel a warm flow of intimacy passing between them as definite as an electric current.

Suddenly she turned and hurried out of the room.

As she passed through the arch and went in the direction of a side door, she looked back at him; smiling; and in this smile of a moment David caught the full message of her wonder and delight at his return.

"Miss Thomas," he called after her.

"Yes."

"Where are you going?"

"To get Auntie Howard. And Flo."

"Oh, don't. Please don't do that. Come back."

She returned and stood before him, inquiringly.

"Don't get anybody," he repeated. "Wait a while. This

affair is between you and me. I want you to help me prove who I am. Then I can go to my mother."

"Your mother! Why, haven't you seen your mother? Didn't you come from your mother to me?"

"No. I have got to go to my mother from you. You had to come first. I will explain all that. I want you to help me."

"How help you? What shall I do?"

"Help me remember. I have got to prove who I am. And I think I can remember better with you."

"But don't you *know* you are Gilly Orr?"

"I may know it well enough. And so may you. But I have got to prove it. You see that, don't you? I have grown up. And it all depends on what you and I remember. You are my only witness. You can go with me to my mother. You will have to go along to tell her who I am."

If Miss Thomas had exercised all her capacity for wonder before, she now had to find further room for that sensation. She sat a while getting her bearings on this unheard-of turn of affairs.

"I understand you now," she said. "You went to Mr. Tyler first. And he disbelieved you."

"No, he didn't exactly disbelieve me. He pointed out that everything must rest on absolute evidence, first-hand proof. There must be no room for doubt. It will be better for my mother and for everybody concerned."

"Then it all depends upon what you and I remember *together!*"

"Yes. We were the only two that really knew each other. Who had common interests, I mean."

Miss Thomas's countenance took on a most serious expression as she approached this formal test. Her attention centered on the setting of a pearl ring, and all the while she was thinking of the white ball on the gate and casting about for something to suggest. She was now back in her fourth

year. It was years and years (as she rated years) since she had left all that behind. But in his presence it seemed almost like yesterday. Presently a touch of humor came into her face and she looked up.

"Well then, do you remember our doll?"

David sat utterly motionless looking straight at her. It was evident that he did not remember. The steadfastness of his look reminded her of the gaze of a faithful dog; he was trying to read her mind. Or rather her eyes—as if a vision of the past were hidden in their depths. He was baffled.

"No, that was hardly fair," she said. "I really had two dolls. There was a wax one that I had to be careful with; it wasn't one I could take any chances with. And there was another my grandmother made for me to play with you. That was really a boy's doll. I should have asked—Do you remember our *big rag?* The calico one, you know."

"Oh, yes!" said David, suddenly manifesting intelligence. "I wouldn't have thought of that. The big rag doll. It was made of calico and stuffed. And it had a funny face. It had a nose—Well, a nose shaped like this." Here he indicated the figure by drawing it on the air. "It was like the picture of a crook-necked squash."

"Yes, yes, that was it. That was the palm-leaf pattern, you know. But that wasn't really its nose. It had figures like that all over it, like a Paisley shawl. But one of those figures came right in the middle of its face and you said that was its nose. I don't know whether Grandmother intended it to be a nose or not; but it fell just in the right place."

"And it had shoe-buttons for eyes," said David, rapidly visualizing.

"Yes. Shoe-buttons for eyes. And you bit one of them off."

"Did I?" he inquired, a serious expression coming over his face. "I don't remember doing that."

"Yes, you did. And after that it had only one eye. I remember how awful I thought it was. You must have been very rough with dolls. It was a big, soft doll with arms and legs and it was stuffed with rags."

"I remember that," said David. "It was soft and comfortable. It sort of warmed up to you. I remember some things mostly by touch. That was the first thing I remembered about you—lifting you up so that you could see the nest."

Miss Thomas's attention reverted to the pearl ring. And then the subject of the rag doll came to an end. The whole personality of the rag doll seemed to be exhausted. Beyond losing an eye and making itself, like Cyrano de Bergerac, immortal with its nose, it had achieved nothing worthy of note. But as it had most certainly been called back to life and identified by the real Gilbert Orr, it had played its part in human affairs.

"And don't you remember the garden we used to play in?" continued Maudie. "It had cinder walks and glass borders all laid out in fancy shapes. There were circles and stars and——"

"There *was* a garden like that at our place, wasn't there!" he exclaimed.

"Why of course."

"Anything like that won't do," he said. "It's not evidence."

"It isn't? Why not? That was our garden that we used to play in."

"No," insisted David, "that sort of memory won't do. There were just such gardens all over. A lot of people have seen them and been in them. As Mr. Tyler says, in order to be evidence it has got to be something that no one in the world but Mrs. Orr's boy could know about."

"But that's impossible," said Maud. "In order to be evidence more than one person has *got* to know it."

"That's just the point. The other person is you. The two of us were together in those days; and it has got to be something between me and you. Something of our own."

"Yes. Now I *see*."

Again she cast back into those first four years and began to wander in the garden. And while she is thinking we might take the opportunity to observe that while she undoubtedly "saw" what he meant, she hardly understood the present moment in the whole light of its history. Nor should she be expected to, not having gone into its peculiar bearings so thoroughly as Mr. Tyler had. All she may be said to know was that Gilly Orr wanted her to do a certain thing; and she was trying her best to do it.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "I wonder whether you remember this. It just came back to me. Now think. What did we used to do with little pieces of glass? Broken pieces of window glass?"

Again David could achieve nothing more than a long, deep look into her eyes.

"Don't you remember?" she prompted. "I had almost forgotten that myself. We used to scoop out a little shallow hole in the ground. And then we would pull some green grass and—Can't you remember it?"

"Sure enough!" said David. "We would scoop out a little hole in the dirt that could be covered by the piece of glass. Then we would fill the hole with green grass and put rose petals and little flowers and things all over the top. And a piece of ribbon, too—yellow ribbon. Then we would press the piece of glass down on it so that they were all flattened up against it like a picture. And I would pack some dirt all round the edges to hold the glass down. And then we would sit and look at it."

Miss Thomas pressed her hands together rapturously as she saw this picture so vividly brought back. Then they sat silent for a space, trying to remember.

"That must have been yellow cigar ribbon," said David. "It had letters on it. And wasn't there a piece of soap that we put in? Marble soap?"

"That was my soap," she added. "I took it. I stole it, you know."

"Did you?"

"Yes. And even the soap was pretty when you looked at it through the glass like that. The flowers and things, with the flat, green grass for a background, made all sorts of pretty designs. It was like making pictures."

"I wonder how we ever came to think of a thing like that?" queried David, considering the matter most seriously. "That must have been your idea. I never thought of it."

"I don't know," she replied. "It looked like one of these glass serving trays with butterflies and thistle floss pressed in them. I must have got the idea somewhere. Or maybe you did."

"Not me. But what I can't understand—what I can't account for—is that this never occurred to me when I was trying to remember things. I see it all now as plain as day. And the doll too. But not till you called it back."

"Well, a man would hardly be likely to remember the doll. Or those pretty things in the ground. That was girl stuff. But you did the dirty work for me. That was digging in the ground."

"I suppose it was too outlandish for me to remember," mused David. "Too ridiculous."

"Why, it wasn't ridiculous at all," she protested. "I would like to see one of those pictures in the ground right now."

"It is as plain as yesterday," said David.

"Even plainer," said Maud. "I remember you used to dig back in the garden near the rhubarb."

"Yes. I can see it was black dirt. And I remember the plants with big leaves."

Maud again applied herself to thought. Notwithstanding the vividness with which these memories occurred to her, and the promise they gave her of being able to recall others at will, she found that such memories were not numerous. They were but moments, special impressions, little experiences which, for some reason, had stored themselves away as being the great events of the time. There must be many others, that she was quite sure of, but she had difficulty in searching them out, especially as she was confined to the special sort of memories that David's situation required.

This she explained to him. She recalled those days simply as a time in her life; there had been a long acquaintance with him; but as for the thousand and one things they did in those days, that was a different matter. It was the happy atmosphere that survived; thoughts of the garden brought back a happy feeling but not many details. What she remembered, in fact, was *himself*. And herself.

"But how about a girl—What was her name? Was there an Aggie?" asked David.

"Oh, you mean Maggie. Maggie McDougall. She is married to a butcher."

"Is she?" said David, vacantly.

While this information might have been, to the mind of Maud, a live and interesting piece of gossip, it meant little to one who had not really known her and did not care particularly what became of her.

"What I remember about her," said David, "is that she had a braid. A long braid of common-ordinary sort of hair. It felt tight like a rope. I didn't like it—that kind of hair. It seems to me that I pulled it."

"Oh, no, *you* didn't pull it. It was she that did the pulling. All you did was to hold on. She came up and insisted on pushing herself in when you were showing me the bird's nest. I guess you did not like her; and she thought she had a right to see the nest. So you grabbed

hold of her braid and she started to run down the road. She was bigger than we were, and she was an awful fool in some ways. And you held on while she was running. It made the dust fly."

"That *was* a dusty road in summer, wasn't it!" exclaimed David. "The dust must have been two or three inches deep. And you could see the whole shape of your feet in it. I must have gone barefooted sometimes. But you never did that I remember. What I remembered was the golden shoes."

David, in the abstraction which came over him as he saw his own footsteps in the dust—an excited abstraction in which he seemed to be close on the trail of other memories —rose from his chair and began walking up and down. In this peripatetic march he confined himself to four or five steps from the chair, which still constituted his base of operations. As he was thus exercising his mind, his hands thrust deep into his pockets, his attention was caught by a water-color in a gilt frame. It was a very live representation of the old covered Y bridge. Although the old Y had not been built with an eye to artistic uses, it had taken on something from age and historic association; and the artist, feeling this, had shown it in all its dark and decrepit dignity, its three arms thrust out, binding the scene together, and making a human tie between the hills. As David had never seen this particular view of it, much less a representation so live and colorful, he immediately gave his mind over to it, not knowing what it might bring back to him.

"That," said Maud, rising and coming over to him, "is the old Y bridge. You remember that, don't you?"

"No," he said. "I could imagine I did. There is something about it that seems familiar. But I don't remember it by sight."

"Probably when you were little you never got up on the hill where you could look down on it like that. If you had

you would remember the Y. It was torn down only a few years ago. We were all very much attached to it."

"Things have changed, haven't they?" mused David. "It almost makes a person feel old to be talking this way and looking back like—old settlers!"

The Y, though he gave it sufficient opportunity, yielded up nothing. They had come to the end of their memories. Whereupon, becoming more conscious of the warm presence of the girl beside him, the one great reality with which he was dealing, he turned and fixed his undivided attention upon her. She felt herself being deeply looked at again, almost *into,* by way of her eyes.

"Now," he said, suddenly grasping her by arm and shoulder, "—Now I can go to my *mother!* And you have got to go along with me, you know. Because *you* know who I *am.*"

She made no reply to this, but returned his look in kind. And David, with a freedom and frankness born of their long years of acquaintance, continued to contemplate her from head to foot.

"You haven't changed though," he said.

"Don't you think so?"

"No; not really. I might almost say you have grown smaller."

"You *have* beat me out by about a foot," she answered. "You have grown very tall."

"Of course your hair is different," he continued. "But not your eyes. You look to me the same as ever. The more I look at you the more it seems that you have hardly grown up."

"Why, Gillie Orr!"

He still kept his hold on her arm. And she, understanding his mood, and knowing that he was thus bringing himself into live touch with the past, remained passive under his touch.

"And when we have gone to my mother we will make a call on Mr. Tyler. I guess we've got *him* fixed. I would like to see him disprove that rag doll."

"Or me either," she added.

Here he removed his hand and stepped back as if to make a final survey of the authentic little girl.

"Is that all for just now?" she asked.

"Well—yes. It's even more than I expected. Maybe we'll be able to think of something else later on."

Miss Thomas, regarding this as her formal release, and feeling privileged to give way to her first impulse to run and tell everybody, proceeded at once to do so. This time she did not pause to look back at him, but hurried through the arch and disappeared through the side door.

David and Gilly (as he was now beginning to regard himself) became conscious, as he stood alone and looked about him, that he had been making himself pretty free in a household to which he had not been introduced. Whereupon he returned to the Chippendale chair and sat on it with an air of military correctness, his face at the same time taking on a look of the most approved and exemplary conduct.

And then he heard his name being proclaimed, with all the ardor of glad tidings, in various parts of the house.

"Oh, Gilly Orr has come back! Gilly Orr has come back! Yes—Gilly Orr. He is here. He isn't dead. He was lost." This seemed to come from a part of the house directly over his head.

Again it sounded in another room; and then farther away and still upstairs—— "Oh, Flo! Come quick. Where are you? Gilly Orr has come back. Yes, *my* Gilly Orr. Mrs. Orr's little boy. He has come back. He is down stairs."

Evidently doors were being left open; and the hall had become a conduit for any number of Gilly Orrs.

This name, now openly proclaimed, sounded rather strange to the person on the Chippendale chair. He was so used

to David and had been so long acquainted with him, that it seemed hard to give him up. But there was no doubt about it. The time had come. And this musical ringing of his name all through the house marked the moment of his rechristening.

He was another person, Gilly Orr, a welcome and widely known and distinguished citizen of Ohio. Maud's voice left no doubt of that. The reserved and exclusive atmosphere of the drawing-room was entirely put to rout by the magic of his name; even the grand piano seemed to take a different attitude toward him, putting its best foot foremost. A chatty little clock, perched upon a corner of the mantelpiece and wagging its tongue at a great rate, seemed to be aware of the whole proceeding. It was half past ten.

After a time, which was no doubt taken up with further explanations upon the part of Maud, David heard a variety of footsteps on the stairs.

In the face of the oncoming situation he began to feel less like a person and more like a strange happening, a phenomenon, an event. And not knowing just what social usages controlled a case of this nature, he decided it were best to rise and stand, pleasantly facing the archway.

So David, now Gilly, did. He came to attention, as it were, ready for inspection. And then, becoming aware that this was probably too military, he mollified the pose by taking on a look more human and less like Private Number 684—though it is to be feared that his efforts in this direction were like the strivings of those who, when the bulb is about to be pressed, are told to "try and look natural, please."

The situation, as it turned out, was one that transcended all the mere formalities of introduction. For a moment David was conscious that he was being stared at, rapturously and wonderingly, by a family group in the archway. Maud, standing in the advance, glanced back and forth between him and them as a sort of speechless messenger and spiritual

connecting-link. And then the pleasant faced woman—she whom Maud had spoken of as Auntie—detached herself from the group and came forward to receive him, pressing his hand warmly as she spoke.

Whatever it was that she said to him, it was very fine and sincere and womanly. Very warm and motherly. David (she called him Gilbert) was quite aware of that.

Behind her, an elderly man with pointed gray beard, who arrived a little late, stood and looked on. He was evidently waiting his turn. He was probably Mr. Howard.

So it proved. When Auntie was through, Mr. Howard, who gave the impression that he might be the owner of any number of grand pianos, and who, upon occasion, was chosen to make little speeches and welcome distinguished visitors to the city, stepped forward. Mr. Howard gave Mr. Gilbert Orr to understand that he was welcome back to the Muskingum valley, congratulated him upon his return, made him feel at home as an Orr, and, in a manner of speaking, extended to him the keys of the city. And then came the girls.

CHAPTER VIII

That period in home building which may be called the front yard period, as distinguished from entrances, approaches and grounds, and especially that phase of it which made much of green glass nuggets and rows of pudding-stone around the flowers, was no longer in evidence at the Howards'—if, indeed, such things had ever been found consistent with their town house. But there was something very old-fashioned and comfortable in the shape of a grape-arbor, which, with other things on the more private side of the house, clung fondly to the idea of a back yard. And a feature of this arbor, making it a place to sit down in even more than to walk through, were two long seats of boards extending through it from end to end and flanking the cinder path on either side. The seating capacity might seem rather large for two, or, indeed for the entire Howard family; it was rather a place for a whole monasteryful of monks or a cloister of nuns to sit in after dinner while they viewed a rather limited world out of either end. It had the atmosphere that fitted such cosy uses; one end looking out upon an old-fashioned garden patch and giving a view of humble flowering moss and a little plantation of chives (which the elder Howard was fond of in his soup) while the other gave upon a row of gooseberry bushes which served as shrubbery while they also served to keep up this idea of kitchen comfort.

Its one great virtue, to the mind of Maud, was that it was not a pergola. She did not like pergolas. It was more "homey"—more Ohiolike. The well-packed path, which was indigenous to the country and consisted of cinders which here rested coolly after their career of fiery industry, added

further to this virtue—more Ohiolike. The grapes, too, were Ohiolike; and they bore testimony to the fact by flourishing at a great rate, so that they covered the arbor completely and made a layer of shade which was impenetrable except where a flaw or two in its leafy roof gave little opportunities to the sunshine. It was an indoors-outdoors sort of place, a garden hallway or burrow of verdure into which you could retire quite a distance, but which had one distinct advantage over most burrows. There was only one end of it which needed watching. And because of this peculiar privacy, which affected to be as public as all out-of-doors, it was, notwithstanding its great seating capacity, just about the right size for two.

The two were sitting in it shortly after dinner. She had spent some time looking straight at him—not straight in the eyes, as usual, but in between them and all around. And somewhat downward to where the scar ended on his cheek. She seemed to be frowning but she was not. For when you looked at the scar across his eye and then at the disfigurement on her own brow, it was apparent that she was not frowning but simply imagining that she had a wound there too.

"Oh dear!" she said. "Wouldn't that have been awful! And you were hit in the chest too! But that other might have—"

"Let's go right over an_ see Mr. Tyler now," said Gilbert, consulting his watch. "You must go with me. And then we will go to my mother. I think somebody ought to go ahead and tell her about it. She ought to be prepared. Don't you think so?"

Maud was very much of the opinion that someone ought, but she vetoed his suggestion that Mr. Tyler was the one to do it. She was in favor of her father, he being a doctor—a practical and experienced angel of the annunciation.

"Papa knows how to do those things," she explained. "Besides, he is your family doctor. He is an old friend of your mother, too, and she has never had anyone else."

"Oh, is he? Will you see him about it?"

"I have already phoned him to come up to Zanesville," answered Maud.

"When will he get here?"

"Hardly before tonight," she said. "But he will come as soon as he can, because I told him it was an urgent case."

"Go ahead. I'll leave it to you."

Having so easily disposed of a matter which had been the undercurrent of his thoughts all the time he had been indulging in a visit with Maud, David let go of the problem and sat with his mind open to the next turn of affairs. Which, after some pause, turned out to be thoughts upon the part of Maud.

"It was very thoughtful of you," she said, "not to go right to her when you first saw her. It will be so much nicer for her to know it is you from the first. Some people would have rushed right in. Then she wouldn't have really known that it was you—and—Well, I was going to say that it wouldn't be nice. She couldn't look back to the time she met you. And that wouldn't be nice at all."

"Do you think she would have disowned me?" he asked.

"No, she wouldn't have disowned you. How could she? But she ought to know from the first that it is really you. If you had taken the problem to her she would have had an awful time. And that wouldn't have been nice."

"I wouldn't want her to even half disown me," he commented.

"And she wouldn't have wanted to. But it would have been like that—half disowning you—if she had had to be in doubt about it. As it is, all I have got to do is to tell papa. And then, when he says everything is ready you can go to her."

"We," insisted David. *"We* have got to go to her. It is *you* that knows it's *me."*

"We can go to her," she corrected.

Maud, as well as she understood the situation, had hardly had time to become thoroughly grounded in it. She was prone to forget that a sponsor was still needed and that he could not become little Gilly again without the help of a God-sister. It was all too wonderful and strange—that she should be the only connecting link between him and his mother! Yes, between him and his real self! And if he had not found her, or if she had died (as he had taken pains to emphasize to her) he could never have become Gilbert Orr or had a mother. It was only through her that it could be done.

"As I was saying," she continued, "Papa can break the news to her and explain it all. Then you and I can go to her, and everything will be nice to look back to. It is really wonderful that you knew just the right thing to do. Especially when one considers that a thing like this so *seldom happens."*

"I didn't really think of it," said David, disavowing the fine prescience. "I wanted to rush right over to her from the cemetery. But I didn't have the nerve."

"The nerve?" queried Maud. And again she fell to contemplating his eyes, and especially the eye which was crossed by the pointed scar. And being back on this theme, she tried to draw him out.

The conversation, as usual, stopped right there. It failed to carry on. Under his present circumstainces, he did not care to waste the time on such subjects. All she had been able to learn was that it was a bomb the same as any other bomb; and when it came down it exploded—went off. And that was about all. But this same Gilbert could talk very well about other things. And when it came to such subjects as Zanesville, and Cousin James, and his mother and old

Fly, oh, how he could talk and ask questions and listen!

He was an especially good listener. But that was Maud's *forte* also in the present company. And while listening may be one of the cardinal virtues, it cannot be practiced by both parties at once. Seeing which, Maud consoled herself with the fact that the things she wanted to know were always leaking out. Whereupon she fell back on tactics—small talk, inconsequential remarks, unguided conversation leading on at random. In this way things that proved to be of great interest to her, little things that he evidently thought nothing of and alluded to as matter of fact, kept dropping out in the most unexpected way; and thus she was able to pursue that important work which she called "piecing things together."

In the hour or two following luncheon she had discovered that this was the best way of getting on. He had stayed to luncheon not only upon invitation but because Maud seemed to take for granted that he would. At luncheon they all took it for granted that he would be with them for dinner; and then he discovered that the Howards expected that he would stop with them, naturally, until the time was ripe for him to make entrance to his mother's heart and home.

David made little objection to this arrangement. And when, after luncheon, Maud proposed that they sit in the arbor together, he was still less inclined to remind anybody that there was a room for him at the hotel.

Maud was quite open and direct about wanting him to herself; so much so that when Flo showed symptoms of going along she intimated that it would be much better if Flo did not. Privately, she explained to Flo that they had not nearly got through remembering, and there might be things which he would not care to talk about before a stranger. Besides which, she might even get him to talking about the war, all attempts at which had so far proved a

failure; and if anything of importance was said, why, of course, Maud could tell Flo all about it—which would do just as well.

After an hour or so in the arbor, the "leaking out" process had brought rich results. Not that David was disinclined to tell all about himself. But having a whole life behind him he hardly knew what to tell; and when he tried to give a formal account of himself he made it so short that nothing was really accounted for. Hence the significance of Maud's leaking-out and follow-up system of learning all about him. Finally they had learned so much about each other that the basis was laid for another question-and-answer method, with which they plied each other freely. And when David had satisfied his first thirst for knowledge about his mother, he devoted more of his time to learning about Maud. And thus, before the afternoon had become far advanced, they had each come into possession of some most interesting information.

He had learned about her——

That she played tennis.

That she could swim a little, too, her father having taught her.

That she had been to college. But not to a down-east college, because her father objected to her breaking home ties to that extent. She had to take the place of her mother with him.

That Mrs. Howard, whom she called Auntie, was not her aunt at all, but an old friend of the family. And that his mother, Mrs. Orr, was an auntie too.

That she was very fond of animals; and so was her father. He was much interested in elephants in a scientific way.

That an elephant has in his trunk nearly forty thousand muscles, capable of distinct action.

That her father had often prescribed medicine which was nothing more than a little colored water. And she had pre-

scribed some, too, in her father's absence, for an old lady who really had nothing the matter with her. And it had resulted in a cure.

That her "colors" were magenta and black.

That she was not fond of knitting, but she had sterilized bandages for their Red Cross headquarters, and she knew all about antiseptics.

That their housekeeper, Mrs. Parker, was a funny old thing; but she and her father knew how to get along with her. But she was really a very good woman and had had reverses. She was an Episcopalian, but poor.

That she and her father were Episcopalians, and so were the Howards; but *his* folks, the Watsons and Orrs, were Presbyterian. But that did not make any difference.

That her father was a family practitioner with an embarrassingly large practice which he was trying to give up. He was not a surgeon especially but could do most anything.

That she never tagged and did not take part in drives. Her father would not allow it.

That her mother had been dead several years.

That all the homely girls were taking up interpretative dancing.

That she was not superstitious and did not mind having a skeleton around the house so long as she did not know who the skeleton *was*. A man's family must get used to anything if it belongs to the man's profession.

So much for Gilbert's new knowledge of Maud. And she, on her part, gathered a hundred and one such pieces of information; though her attitude toward it was not so much that of a young lady gaining information as it was that of an old friend listening to the news. It was news in a double regard; for besides being interested in the adventures of the man and the soldier, she had a most live concern in all the things that had happened to little Gilly. To her, he was a new commentary on life, all the more interesting be-

cause life, striking out at an utterly new angle, had taken for its base of operation a being with whom she had been so familiar. And toward whom, now that she had become settled in his company, she had a feeling of intimacy different from that which she had toward any other person whatsoever. Thus, all the time that she was looking him so clearly in the eyes and receiving like candor in return, her conceptions kept playing back and forth between the man before her and the little Gilly of the garden—a playmate come back to her from the days when it might almost have been said that these two were one.

Maud, it must be admitted, was prone to get these two beings sadly mixed; she could not keep them strictly separate; and so, when he told her about his childhood in Chicago, she was expending her sympathy and pure affection upon the grown Gilly who was before her. And he was even more prone to such confusion, quite forgetting that Maud was now a marriageable young lady from one of Zanesville's first families. Time to the contrary notwithstanding, she persisted in being Maudie, the same Maudie who had begun life with him in a garden, and who had come to him one evening as natural as ever, a pure spirit in white raiment on the brink of Putnam hill.

From all of which we perceive that Miss Thomas was not "piecing things together," in any sense of forming his acquaintance or justifying her opinion of him; she was simply finding out what life had imposed upon an Orr and a Watson, and especially upon the long-lost Gilbert. As for an Orr and a Watson, her people had known *them* since long before either of them was born.

"And to think that you remembered *me*," she said. "Me and the post! And that you knew all the time that you belonged in this country."

"I didn't really know it," he answered. "I felt that I ought to belong here."

"And you immediately felt at home here. You knew it in a way, even if you couldn't prove it."

"I am already settled down here. It's where I belong. But you will have to tell me a lot. I've got to catch up on things."

"I'll take you around and show you. I'll have to take you down to the Lookout. In that way you will get an idea of the Muskingum valley. It won't take you long to get there."

Plans along this line were cut short by the appearance of Flo at the entrance of the arbor. She announced a call on the phone.

"It's Ethel," she exclaimed. "She wants to know why you don't come over there and superintend. They've got you on lanterns, you know. And I didn't know what to tell her."

"Oh yes," said Maud, suddenly arising and applying thought to some imminent problem. A glance at David showed that he was being included.

"It's a lawn party by the Guild," she said. "I'm on decorations. That's lanterns. Wouldn't you like to go along with me and help hang? You could just work with me, you know; and I'd tell you what to do."

"Certainly," said David. "That is, if you think it is all right."

"Tell her I am coming, Flo. Say that I am on my way."

"Yes, it will be all right," she said to Gilbert. "We can manage between us."

In order to manage it between them—for it would hardly do to take Gilbert Orr to a lawn party just at the present stage of affairs—he would have to appear *incognito*. He would have to pretend that he was Mr. David Mann from Chicago. It struck David that this would be quite easy to do. He would hardly forget that name or be slow in answering it.

"That's easily managed so far as I am concerned," he said to Maud. "But how about you? You will have to remember; I don't want to take any chances. My name is David Mann. Don't forget that."

"I won't," she answered him. "I will pretend that you are just a friend of mine."

Under this scheme of life the afternoon passed away pleasantly and usefully. Thanks to the step-ladder, which was of the variety which collapses to form a chair, and which, in addition to this complication of machinery, was as unstable as all step-ladders are on uneven ground, Maud's friend from Chicago proved a godsend. And being a godsend, everybody took him for granted. No one thought to inquire very particularly how she came by him. Mr. Mann quite obscured himself by his usefulness and was lost in democracy of work. And when he had performed wonders on the very top step of the ladder, ably superintended by Maud, and had done a dozen things for other women who simply took possession of him, Maud and her *incognito* bade everybody a wholesale good-bye and went home together with the remembrance of a sociable and successful afternoon.

At dinner time, which was set for half past six, the Doctor had not yet put in his appearance. But he had telephoned Flo, mentioning the name of some disease or accident which she could not exactly understand, and wanting to know whether the present case could wait; and upon being informed that Maud was hanging lanterns and that the case *could* wait (though Flo could not tell him about it over the phone) he had said that he would come that evening. But it might be rather late.

"I believe I'll cut the party anyway," said Maud. The *anyway* meant that she had been intending to cut it in order to be at home when her father arrived; and now that lateness made her perfectly free to go she was going to cut it on other grounds. She could hardly take Gilbert along with

her. While his *incognito* had worked well under conditions of mere usefulness and had hardly taken any fibbing at all, she could hardly undertake to preserve it through a whole evening on a purely social footing. And she had not the least intention of going without him.

"But you *can* go if you want to," said Flo.

"Yes, I suppose I could. But aside from that you can never tell what Papa calls 'late.' Especially when he is saying *late* in connection with me. And besides, if I do stay home, Gilbert and I will not have to simply sit round here and wait. He has been saying that he would like to go up on Putnam hill again; and this would be a beautiful evening to go. Are you going to the party?"

Flo, who had been fully intending to go, hardly knew what reply might fit further developments. She answered tentatively—

"Why, I suppose so."

"Because," added Maud, "I was thinking you might go along with us."

Whereupon Flo, seeing that it was no *sub rosa* affair and that she was not taboo, saw reasons why neither of them really ought to attend the lawn party.

"In case your father should come earlier than we expect, I can arrange to have Briggs come and get you—that is if we go up on the hill. But Briggs could hardly come to the party and call you away without arousing comment and making more or less of a sensation. And you would have to do too much fibbing."

"That's what I was thinking," said Maud.

"And if I went without you—"

"Then *you* would have to fib," put in Maud. "They would ask why I didn't come, and want to know all about the young man I had with me and—everything. It won't do to let a *scintilla* of this secret get out; not till Gilbert has returned to his mother and it is all properly announced."

"Then I think it would be nicer for all of us to go up on the hill," concluded Flo.

Which they did. But not till the two young ladies, leaving their young man to entertain himself in the drawing room, spent a considerable while upstairs. When they came down, Miss Maud Thomas had achieved something in the way of dress from which Gilbert could hardly remove his eyes; and though he mentioned it not, he could only wonder whether it was pure accident or poetic inspiration. She was again attired in the white dress, and sashed. But now it was not the sash of Roman stripe, but a sash of *pink*. And it was tied with the *bow behind*. She had gone up as Maud and come down as Maudie. And whereas he was always prone to slip back into the person of David, he was now looking out of the eyes of Gilly.

Putnam hill, that evening, quite lived up to its reputation. The lighting of the west was positively theatrical; and the broad panorama of the valley, under the able lectureship of Maud and Flo, began to reduce itself to the size of home. Each hill took on a local habitation and a name. And when the light was low they all sat down on the rustic bench (his bed of the night before) and took on a frame of mind in harmony with the gloaming. In which circumstances, Flo, who had been apprised of the mere facts in the case without participating in any of its intimacies, and who had not yet had a chance to be "told all" as it eventuated in the arbor, thought it was a good time to set reminiscences a-going.

So far as Gilbert was concerned, she was not fully successful. In the presence of a third party he did not quite go back into the garden and become little Gilly again. And while he cheerfully admitted facts, including the loss of the doll's eye, it was done in such a way as to keep it in the domain of mere fact; he did not actively participate. With Maud it was different.

"And he pulled Maggie McDougall's hair and wouldn't

have her around. And chased her down the road in an awful dust. Didn't you?"

"Yes, I suppose I did," said Gilbert. He seemed a little reticent about admitting such conduct toward the young lady. The reason was that he suddenly remembered that Maggie's hair was *black*. Though not so fine and beautiful a black as Flo's, which, in contrast with the white skin of her neck, was very pleasant to look upon. And which he would not have the least inclination to pull. But he had an uneasy consciousness that Maggie's hair *was* black and he rather avoided that subject as the basis of his antipathy toward her. And he did not add anything to Maud's account of his bird's nest. One might suppose that he still considered that garden and all its appurtenances as the private property of himself and Maud; another world not to be entered into except in her company. Thus to Flo he fell somewhat short of becoming little Gilly again; but to Maud, who recalled his delightfully exclusive conduct toward other girls, he seemed more like Gilly than ever.

Briggs not having put in his appearance, they decided to forestall him by walking back, keeping to the route which he would be likely to follow in carrying out his errand.

When they reached home Doctor Thomas had not yet arrived. But David saw him coming up the stone steps shortly after; and then his figure loomed large in the doorway as he entered the drawing-room and addressed his daughter in the most unprofessional manner by the name of "Snooks."

During the interchange of greetings that followed, Maud made no reference to the young man who was so very plainly in the room with them. Nor did she, during all the time it took to tell him about Decorations and more intimate matters, betray any consciousness of his existence. Though the Doctor, having noted the strange young man after his first preoccupation with Snooks, glanced in his direction several

times as if he thought an introduction to this person might be in order. And Gilbert, seeing by Maud's attitude that he was theoretically non-existent, made no move or glance which might upset the theory.

"And now what is it, Snooks? Something serious?"

"Papa," said Maud, "I want to see you in private. Flo said we could use the billiard room."

She rose and led the way; and the Doctor, taking up his medicine case, followed after. Not, however, without taking another and more deliberate look at the young man, giving him a going-over in a professional way which took little pains to disguise itself. David had now taken on a sort of ante-room demeanor, Maud having made it plain enough that she considered him as a person who was sitting on the other side of a professional partition, and who, when it came to a serious consideration of his case, could be quite openly and candidly excluded from the conversation. Hence the quick glance of the practiced eye, gathering some idea beforehand of what the young man's physical indications might be. Evidently he had been told nothing of the nature of the case.

David, left sitting thus to abide his time, did not move, mentally at least, out of the atmosphere that Maud had clamped down over him. He waited a long time, an interminably long time, while the clinic was going on. He knew that Maud (always favorable to him, of course) was submitting the evidence, taking his life to pieces and submitting his character and conduct, part by part, to her father the Doctor. Gilbert's imagination even went so far afield as to wonder whether a billiard table, in case of emergency, might not be a very good place upon which to perform an operation. He decided that, with a sheet as a covering, it probably would.

This atmosphere was suddenly lifted by the voice of Maud

calling to him from the top of the stairs. There was that in her tone which conveyed much more to him than the mere words.

"O Gilbert," she called. "It's all right now. Come on up."

CHAPTER IX

Doctor Sylvester Thomas, to whose ample and bishoplike figure we have paid scant attention (being hurried along by Gilbert's impatience to meet his mother), had now to set to work and fulfill Maud's opinion that her Papa was a man who knew just how to do such things. He took due thought and care that the forthcoming event should turn out according to her specifications, namely, so that it would be "nice to look back to."

With this end in view, he took no step that evening toward the performance of his mission, thinking, quite rightly no doubt, that it were better for all concerned to have the meeting take place amid the fresh powers of morning. Bright and early the next day, therefore, he turned his car in the direction of Abram, the young man and the indispensable Maud crowding in beside him and sharing as best they could what space was left in a coupé the seating capacity of which his own person occupied fully half. Thus snugly disposed, they came finally to the railroad tracks, and the car went into a noisy "second" as it encountered the ascent of the dug road and worked its way up toward the house of James and the house of John.

It had occurred to them on the evening before that it would be necessary to stop at John Watson's place and apprise him of the facts. This mostly because Gilbert and Maud would have to wait there till the Doctor had done his part, after which there would have to be some way of letting them know immediately that it was time to come.

Cousin John had been up bright and early that morning too, having in mind to get the cart in action and meet

certain new developments upon the part of the temperance well. On account of heavy rains, the well was rapidly coming into existence again,—its thirty-odd feet of filling having settled and shrunk together to a surprising extent. It had not only swallowed up the mound that was left on it but was going on with the work so that it was now a circular hole three feet in depth and a decided menace to traffic. To Cousin John it seemed as if Nature, having doubts as to the outcome of the prohibition amendment, had decided to dig it again.

On this account, Cousin John, having finished his chores among his animals in the valley—his barns, his stables and his beasts, as he always referred to them in his grace at table—threw the wooden saddle with its dependent chains upon the back of old Fly and backed her into the cart to go for more dirt. When he had hitched her at all points, and thrown the brown sheep's pelt across the seat, he took her by the bit and led her to the well, his idea being to look the job over and estimate how much filling it would take. While this was his practical purpose, we must suspect that there was a sentimental influence that drew him thither, for he stood much longer than would have been necessary for so practical a man to estimate the amount of dirt. The well, again in evidence, reminded him most deeply of his father, the elder John, and the great Cause which had been the hope of his life, and so he stood looking into the hole as reverentially as if it were an open grave upon which the last shovelfuls were soon to be thrown. And thinking, too, that if prohibition did not carry, after all, and the old well was filled up, it would indeed be the grave of his father's hopes.

While he was thus solemnly standing, shovel in hand, the Doctor's car, having negotiated the final steep and struck the easier grade at the top, went into "high" again and rolled up before the house. Whereupon Cousin John, seeing that

it was his old friend Doctor Thomas, and the beautiful and accomplished Miss Maud Thomas, dropped his shovel on the spot and went forward to greet his guests.

Having given his friend the doctor a big-fisted handshake, and having done the like with Miss Maud (being careful now to use less strength as he recalled that he had "hurted" ladies whom he was too glad to see) he was about to extend the same courtesy toward the third visitor; but altered the movement into a philosophic scratching of his chin as he saw that the young man was a stranger to him and would probably need to be introduced.

The introduction, however, was not immediately forthcoming. Doctor Thomas, aware of the carrying power of John's psalm-singing voice, and familiar with those favorite expressions of—Man dear! Man alive! And ye don't tell me now!—thought it best to have the introduction take place within doors.

He therefore suggested that they go into the house at once as he had important business in hand. And being in, the Doctor made a straightaway statement of the plain facts; for as John Watson was so well fortified, physically, mentally and spiritually, to sustain all the shocks of life, it was hardly necessary with him to pad the truth.

"Man dear, man alive; and ye don't *tell* me now!" exclaimed John.

Which was just what Doctor Thomas had expected he would say. And so the story was soon told; though not without some digression and a great amount of wonder and admiration for Maud's important part in it. Then followed a more emphatic *Man dear! Man dear!* as Cousin John, grasping Gilbert's hand and clapping him on the shoulder, stood looking at him, and almost into him.

Gilbert, grasping that large, horny hand—his own flesh and blood at last!—and gazing into the depths of those blue, Bible-reading eyes, was conscious of a kinship that he might

be proud of, a sort of manhood which was at once strong and tender, powerful and gentle, altogether new to him and yet strangely familiar. He felt at that moment that he had really got home. And in John's "Man dear!" he heard a world of welcome.

"But Lidy!" exclaimed John, thinking now of the one mainly concerned. "We must take him right up to Lidy."

"No. Not yet," said the Doctor, lifting a hand and quashing the suggestion.

He then went on to explain his plans. It was necessary that Maud and Gilbert wait near at hand—maybe for quite a time—while Gilbert's identity was being established with his mother; and that they be prepared to come at once upon receiving a signal. It would be better to send the news by signal than to make an errand of it; for any delay and suspense after Alida was waiting to receive him would hardly be desirable. So this must now be arranged for.

Here several difficulties made themselves apparent. John's porch would hardly serve as a waiting place, certain trees and shrubs and the lay of the land preventing the necessary view. The most available window upstairs suffered under the same sort of drawback; it commanded a view of the upper outline of Alida's house together with a part of the side porch, but this latter was quite obscured by the thick growth of grape-vine. The only place that could be clearly seen from both houses was the cemetery itself, and even this, from the lower story of John's house, presented nothing but the steep bank. Maud's suggestion that she could go up that bank with David and wait with him there was a thing which Cousin John would not listen to. He would *not* have Miss Maud doing anything like that so long as he had a comfortable house and a chair for her to sit in. Oh no, no, no.

Having now a problem to solve, John forgot about the returned David, while he bent his mind upon it. And

presently he came forth with a stratagem which struck him as being both shrewd and practical.

The key to the whole situation, he said, was the family burial lot. It could be plainly seen from both houses. It had been located with that special purpose in view; and its midway situation, not far from either house, made it the ideal place for the receiving and transmitting of a signal. John would take his shovel and go over into the cemetery as if he had some work to do. He would station himself upon the family lot. Upon receiving a signal from the Doctor he would immediately send it on by waving his shovel to David and Maud, who would be watching from his second-story window. That window had always served as a lookout. John had himself made a practice of sitting there; and he had spent the night there more than once, keeping his eye on the lantern. But this time it would be a shovel.

"I'll take along my long-handled shovel," he explained, "and go over there as if I had work in mind. Which I might well be doing; for there is a place over there where I did the filling that would be none the worse for a few touches of the shovel."

The advantages and necessities of this stratagem being made apparent, the three parties to the affair dispersed their several ways—Doctor Thomas to tell the story to Alida; Cousin John to take his place upon the knoll amid the assembled Watsons; and Maud and Gilbert to sit and watch together at the second-story window.

Maud needed no one to guide her to this upper chamber. She had so often called on Aunty Belle (who was now away on one of her infrequent railway journeys) that she knew the old house by heart. She took David upstairs into the John Watson bedroom. They drew two chairs to the same window and sat down to wait.

Cousin John did not immediately make his appearance.

Evidently he had gone up to the main entrance and around by way of the skating pond. David took advantage of this interim to look about. The place interested him.

Halfway between the two windows was a small stand on top of which was the family Bible. On top of the Bible was a pair of spectacles, silver rimmed. Occupying a corner of the room was a commodious walnut bed, elaborately carved; and on the wall directly over the bed hung a shotgun. This gun, an old-fashioned muzzle loader, was ready for instant use. At least Gilbert judged so by the unfired copper cap and the position of the hammers. Evidently Cousin John, notwithstanding his religious proclivities, was a fighting man. He did not feel comfortable unless the gun was ready for action.

"Yes, it's loaded," said Maud, in answer to his query. "That gun belonged to his father, your great-uncle John. He keeps it there, just the same as ever. And that cavalry sword—I guess you call it a sabre—was his too. They were always great men for horses. But especially work horses."

The silver-rimmed spectacles, it developed, had also belonged to his great-uncle John. And Cousin John now used them exclusively for Bible reading, his eyes having "come round" to them. He used them mostly for reading the Psalms of David, as his father had done. He saw things with the same eyes. And this particular pair, to distinguish them from the gold-rimmed glasses of Aunty Belle, were known as the Bible specs.

"It is a pretty solid-looking sort of a house," commented Gilbert, looking around at the place in general but more particularly at the doorway. He had noted, on coming through the bedroom door, that the door-frame was unusually deep and the wall very thick. It was especially thick for a mere inner wall or partition.

"Yes," said Maud. "All these inner walls are solid brick. They are the same as outside walls."

"What! All these walls to the hallways and the rooms?"

"Yes. They have most of them *been* outside walls. Your great-uncle John built it a part at a time. The house, in its beginnings was a powder-house. And that, of course, had to be thick and fireproof and strong. He used it to store powder for the quarrymen and miners. Then when he wanted a house to live in he took the powder-house and began adding to it."

"It doesn't look like a pieced-together house," observed Gilbert.

"No. He always had the idea of making it square. And a square brick house is always good style."

David walked over and again looked at the wall, spanning its thickness with widespread fingers. Maud was surprised at the extent to which his hand opened; it was strikingly large and flexible. In some regards, now that she saw it, he was a little like a Watson.

"He kept adding to it for years," she continued. "And it was always complete though it wasn't done. Your great-uncle John built his house a room at a time—like the chambered nautilus."

Of what Gilbert might have replied to this, and whether his knowledge of poetry covered this latter allusion, we shall have to remain in ignorance; for Maud, looking round at this moment after too long a neglect of duty, saw that John had arrived on the knoll. He must have been there some time, for he had now taken his stand; and he remained in the fixed position, his head turned toward Alida's house and the long-handled shovel standing straight up in readiness before him. Standing thus motionless, his gaze fixed in the one undeviating direction, with the pointed shovel blade upward and handle down, he looked for all the world like an ancient halberdier standing guard over the graves of his ancestors.

The comparison might go even further; and without owing

anything to this mere momentary resemblance. Cousin John, in his own proper person, had that about him which was strikingly Cromwellian—at once spiritual and close to the soil. He might well have been a stubborn Roundhead, quite able with scythe or mattock or even this instrument which he had now in hand, to hold his ground against a king, and stand off the most gallant onslaught of his cavaliers. Family history said that they had done so. And John looked very much as if he might be on the point of doing it again.

Cousin John, like the elder John and his brother James, belonged to a branch or strain of the Watsons which persisted, however versatile the family might be in some of its manifestations, in producing men of this type. They were men of the soil, rock handlers and diggers and builders, sticking close to elementary things in both deed and thought. And so, however the family might break out by marriage into new types of beauty or show indications of the bookman or the cavalier, there were always those among them who stood for the plainer qualities, as if to keep in evidence the solider foundation on which their blood was built.

Maud, being well acquainted with these qualities in the men, and having heard her father speak of them, was now reminded of them as she watched the figure on the knoll. Then her thoughts turned to Gilbert. And to the hand which had surprised—almost startled her—as he opened it wide and stretched it out. She thought, too, of the persistence with which he had stuck to the idea of finding his mother, of his strong instinct for home, and the stubbornness which had kept him from giving up.

Gilbert, upon hearing Maud's "There he is," dropped all other thoughts and hurried to the seat beside her. Then silence fell as they sat watching together.

But presently Maud broke it.

"That's your lot," she said.

"Mine?"

"Yes. The Watsons'."

"That big granite stone?"

"Yes. That's the big general one. The rest are just markers. They are all on it. And there are vacant spaces."

"Spaces?"

"Yes. For other names, you know."

"Who's there?"

"On the monument?"

"Yes."

"There's Ruth—and William—and John. That's Ruth buried over at that corner. And John's over there." And Maud went on indicating their whereabouts as near as she could recall.

"There's one that isn't there, though," she continued. "He never came back. And they couldn't find him."

"Who's that?"

"William—aged seventeen. That's your great uncle Willie. They always call him Willie. He was lost in the war."

"The Civil War?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"At Fort Wagner. They were nearly all killed there, you know. They went out to look for him but couldn't find him. But a man saw him fall. Both legs were gone."

"So he isn't there."

"Yes. His name's there. It's on the monument. You'll see it."

"Who brought back the sword?"

"That's John's. He came back."

"Oh."

In the silence which had taken possession of the Watson house, and of which the two were conscious, these things were said in subdued tones. Sometimes, upon Maud's part, almost in a whisper.

The objects of her reference could be seen by Gilbert without averting his gaze from the figure of Cousin John. And John, with an infinite capacity for standing still and devoting his mind to one single purpose, made no move which so much as rippled the current of their thoughts. He was a man who might have been standing there ever since the monument was erected; and who might be there when other monuments had come and gone if it were in the line of duty. While they gazed at John, he gazed in the direction of Alida's; and the principal thing they were conscious of was silence. But it was a leaky silence, so far as the two were concerned, and dribbled remarks.

In the midst of one of these silences (Gilbert was thinking of asking her some more about the boy William) Cousin John showed indications of moving. Then suddenly he broke into action. The blade of the shovel went up high and began swinging back and forth.

With the waving of this iron flag, sending a thrill through him as no other signal had ever done, Gilbert jumped up from his seat, followed by Maud. Together they went through the hallway and down the stairs and out of the door.

When they were on the sidewalk, Gilbert went faster and faster, unconsciously increasing his gait. Maud, to keep up with him, took hold of his sleeve. Then he seized her hand, taking her along with him, and did not relax his hold till he drew near to the gate and the outstretched arms of Alida. Even then he did not let go till the very last moment, dropping the hand of one to go to the arms of the other.

CHAPTER X

The little scene which was enacted that summer morning in the parlor in Abram—simple, owing little to mere words, and deep beyond all indications of the drama—was one which Doctor Thomas carried away with him as being something new in *his* experience. After a lifetime spent amid scenes of birth and death, each bringing with it a new knowledge of the human heart, he felt that in this scene of quiet meeting—standing aside and viewing it deeply—he had come to his culminating experience in the knowledge of Womanhood. And yet not by anything that had been said or done, but by what he inwardly saw and understood.

In twenty years the little Gilbert had undergone a change. A man had come in answer to her cry for the child that was lost. In twenty years his playmate, the little Maud, had grown and ripened, and had stepped, almost suddenly, across the line to womanhood. And this budding woman had come up the path that morning, bringing Gilbert back to her and holding him by the hand! For twenty years Alida had yearned for him as a child, only recently, and in the imagined figure of a soldier, thinking of him as a man. And in that twenty years had life been standing still with her? Or had she too undergone a change?

Yes, she had. She had become even *more* a mother. And it was this fact that seemed to go back into the Doctor's farthest reaches of knowledge and engage his deepest thought.

Motherhood, like all the great relations of life, is subject to growth and a deepening change as time goes on. The mere girl with the clinging infant on her arm and a world

of promise ahead of her needs time and experience and all the broadening and deepening influences of a mother's joy and pain to fully discover and explore the depth of that instinct within her. It unfolds itself by phases, having in it the seeds of all things from the first; and nothing shall keep it from going on to deeper and richer life, though it has to thrive on deprivation and disappointment and despair. And so finally we have that consummation of Motherhood, that most arresting picture of them all—the woman with the grown son by her side! She it is who has been all things, seen all things and known all things; and while she has lost nothing of her first warm motherhood she has added to it all the wealth of a woman's inward living. And now, mellowed by time, softened and strengthened by trials borne and despondencies overcome,—enlarged in all her capacities of heart and mind and soul,—she stands with her one great reward beside her.

She is motherhood, full, ripened and replete. And how little would she be willing to exchange, for the infant that knew her not, even though she may have seen heaven in its eye, the young man at last grown into sonship.

This is a heritage which most women come into by degrees, not suddenly and all at once. At first the mere girl, recently relinquished of her doll, and turning her back finally, as she thinks, upon the world of make-believe, finds herself with the infant on her arm. This too is motherhood, strong in instinct, and ready, without so much as the taking of a thought, to fly in the face of death. After which, all life to her for years, is nothing but a thought of education. What solicitous guidance; what careful leadings forth; what hopes and fears in the new adventure of shaping a mind and soul amid all the contrary and hidden influences of the world! What sense of responsibility as the parents now take up the problem of Education in its final phase. What college shall he go to? What career shall he choose?

And then what further hopes and fears when the formal process is finished and their man is launched upon the world! Have they brought out all that was in him? Have they followed a shaping process which will foster and develop and improve the lines of ancestral strength? Here, after all, is where hopes and fears begin.

And then some day, after much preoccupation with Success, and much trying of his mettle on the hard anvil of the world, his mind turns back to his mother. He begins to think of her as his chief possession; he sees much that he did not understand before; and now he looks into her eyes with a man's full understanding of what a mother *is*. This is the moment of her recompense. In this great fruition of character and understanding, whose slow unfolding has been ardently watched from a time he was hardly conscious of his own existence, is the woman's great reward. He stands at last beside her in full companionship, looks her in the eye as with the eye of another self; and then she knows that she has arrived at motherhood indeed. At last he is her Son.

It is a heritage which comes to most women by some such experience, gradually. They see it slowly coming on. They know the signs of promise, are aware of the progress that is being made. It is visible and expected.

Consider, then, the case of Alida Orr, she whose years of motherhood had had no object to work on; and who, deprived of all part in his bringing-up has been as bereft of him as if he were dead. Yet feeling all the while that he may be alive; and if so, getting his education and shaping his career and character in any way at all. Her dearest possession the mere sport of chance and shuttlecock of fortune! And for her, complete denial of a mother's rights. Utter restraint of her hand and heart from any share in his making; her fostering nature quite shut out from all those tender ministrations by which she would hope to guide and

shape him and bind him to herself. Her long years of motherhood, indeed, but a blank and interim of time! And so, having no object to work upon, she can but cling to the little plaid dress and picture him in the velvet suit with the shining buttons while she thinks what he may be and what he might have become!

Imagine, then, her feelings when she hears that Gilbert is coming back! That he is to be delivered to her out of the Void, suddenly and at once as by a leap of time! That her child is going to return to her, springing out of the cradle as it were, in man's full stature and in soldier clothes!

Follow, for a moment, those quick questionings that come to her lips—and the trepidations of her heart as she waits for Doctor Thomas's reply. And then the upleaping of her spirit as the Doctor (who knows how to do these things) assures her that he is all she could hope him to be; that that great bear, the world, has somehow licked him into shape and made a man of him. That, in truth, he is an Orr and a Watson, bearing a guise of his own but true to the seed.

Consider, then, the recompense as she learns that he has found her, not by accident, not by chance, but in the face of difficulty and after much searching out. That for a long time he had been thinking of her! That he was not to be satisfied till he found her! And then the information (growing deeper and deeper) that he yearned for her, *whatever she might be like,* so long as he could call her mother; and that, with only a dream of her in mind, caring not whether she was rich or poor, he had sought for as he would seek a high ideal!

But where is he! Why does he not come? When will he be here?

Imagine the rushing together of all the forces of her nature as she learns that he is near at hand—that he has been holding himself in readiness for this moment—that

already the signal has been given and soon—very soon now—she will see him coming. Whereupon she hurries to the door and *does* see him coming; and with him the little girl with whom he used to play! Then out on the porch she goes, and pauses, scarcely believing her eyes.

Verily, Alida Orr, unto you this day a son is born. And such a son as you, in your longing fancies, when your heart awakened to the drums of war, imagined him to be! Already his eyes are upon you in the distance; and his stride grows bigger as he comes. And he is coming to you for no reason in the world but that his ripened nature has taught him what a mother *is*. And now she holds herself no longer. She rushes to the gate to receive him in her arms.

"Mother!"

"Gilbert."

"Oh, Mother. Mother!"

"Gilbert. My boy!"

That meeting was hardly a thing of words. Language affords no special terms to be kept for such special uses.

Doctor Thomas, used as he was to all things between birth and death, stood aside with his arm around Maud, and felt that he was witnessing something new. Possibly it was something of novelty in the spectacle itself—the woman clasping to her breast the man with whom she had yet to become acquainted, the strong young man enfolding in his arms the woman whom, virtually, he had never met before—that gave him the impression of seeing something new. Yet not new, but old; and rather a new insight of that which is.

The Doctor and Maud, when the first meeting was over, went with them along the vine-clad porch and into the parlor.

Maud's part in the affair, so inseparable from this happy outcome, now brought itself to the fore. Alida, while she understood the situation well enough, could hardly get herself fully convinced that this was the way Gilbert had come

back to her. And she could not sufficiently express her wonder and her gratitude to Maud. And now that the conversation became general everything was gone over again; and so they talked and talked. But as between Alida and her son, the deepest things were said not in words but in looks; and in the pressure of his hand on hers and hers on his as they sat beside each other on the sofa. As if she, already knowing the facts of his life, was satisfied to have him, not in mere converse, but in bodily possession.

The things *they* had to say were too many—they would take weeks and months. And the weeks and months are waiting. It will all come forth on summer evenings as they sit together on the porch behind the grape-vines; it will make itself known on sunny afternoons as they stroll in the garden together; it will keep coming forth on quiet Sundays as they walk together in the cemetery, her arm in his. It will still take occasion to reveal itself in the thousand little commonplaces of life, day after day, as they live together and grow more deeply acquainted. And it is only in these weeks and months, when sudden joy has settled into happiness, that the present moment may find its full expression.

For it is not in the supreme moments of experience that we find the true material of life. Not on the peaks of joy but on the traveled plains of daily existence is life brought to its finest test. Joy itself is too much akin to pain. But happiness is joy that has settled down and come to stay. Happiness is habit.

So many things are already waiting for Gilbert's attention that it will soon seem to him as if the Valley could not have got along without him. There is a new kiln to be built, a vein of coal to be looked into, certain interests in the pottery to be looked after, and, in time, a vacancy to be filled on the board of directors. All this shall seem to be the mode of his happiness; but in truth it will consist in this atmosphere of home and the prevailing consciousness that this is

his land, *his* country and *his* mother. And with the feeling that these hills are his kindred, that he belongs here, and that he too is a Man from Zanesville.

This happiness for him has not yet begun. But it is waiting near by. And when it comes it will come in the guise of the commonplace; for the commonplace may be more than it seems.

Already, when he had hardly been an hour in the house, the familiar and the commonplace is beginning to take him up and enclose him round. And if we would get a glimpse of it we need but to step out into the kitchen and view the doings of that coal-black person, Aunt Caroline.

Aunt Caroline, when this visitation from Heaven came down upon their quiet household, was very much in evidence. She was here, there and everywhere giving expression to surprise, consternation and ecstasy. She came very near having an attack of religious fervor. If any extravagant expressions were necessary in this great climax of their lives, Aunt Caroline had them at her tongue's end. And when she had fully satisfied herself that it was the authentic "chile" that had come back, mere words failed her; whereupon she went back to the kitchen to find some other means of expression.

Aunt Caroline's means of expression, over and beyond her camp-meeting vocabulary, really consisted in fried chicken and cake. Here she could say much. And seeing that the Doctor and Maud would naturally stay to dinner, and that it ought, in any event, to be a festive occasion, she rolled up her sleeves and set to work. Down into the cellar she went—that cool, sweet cellar blasted out of the solid limestone—and from the little square pool in its floor which was filled with live water from an underground spring, she lifted the largest can of cream. With this as the basis of operations, together with judicious selections from larder, bin and barnyard, she set to work and killed the fatted chicken.

Alida, since moving back to the old homestead, had adopted country customs with regard to the hour of dinner, a change which Aunt Caroline greatly approved of. And now that she was in the midst of preparations with a good early start, she regarded it a personal favor, that Gilbert, after an absence of twenty years, did not come back and drop in on her "jest at mealtime."

Aunt Caroline's white folks, by the time she had everything ready and the table arranged "jest so," had moved from the parlor, the Doctor and Alida sitting on the porch watching Maud and Gilbert as they made a selection of flowers for a bouquet at the far end of the garden. But just as Aunt Caroline came to get them, Gilbert had left the premises entirely, being taken out of the gate by Cousin John to have a full-front view of old Fly, who, as a friend of his youth, ought surely to be remembered.

To the Doctor and her mistress Aunt Caroline made the announcement of dinner with an extra touch of high and formal courtesy. But Gilly she went after in quite a different manner.

"Come on in, chile," she said, motioning with both arms at once. "Come on in to yo' dinnah now. Ise got a seat fo' you right beside yo' Ma."

CHAPTER II

To a man in Gilbert's position in life, inheriting his world from a former state of being; coming into it at man's estate and finding a whole lifetime of relationships ready made; feeling a warm and familiar welcome in the very spirit of the place, and yet lacking in all those memories which would give background to such intimate and settled relations; unable to remember what he should and suddenly surprised by a memory where he least expected to find it, all was calculated to give him a feeling of being in the midst of two lifetimes. There was the one he had lived and the one he had not.

Behind the most commonplace thing might lurk a memory, an eerie and haunting half suggestion, undetermined whether to come forth and make itself known or whether to steal back into oblivion again. Inanimate things sometimes took on an air of being acquainted with him, paltering with his past; and in this too prevalent state of affairs he did not know at what moment, or where, he might stand face to face with the ghost of himself.

Tending to increase this feeling, especially for the first week or two, was Cousin John's habit of telling anecdotes about his childhood. John was everlastingly recalling the time when little Gilly said this and little Gilly did that; and Gilbert, at first listening to these doings and sayings with much interest, became bored by them. He was tired hearing about a third party whom he did not know, especially when the third party was himself.

Cousin John's memories, as Maud put it, belonged to the time B. C.—meaning thereby Before Childhood. And by

this point of view she as much as said that his real beginnings were in the garden with her, and that life for both of them went back only as far as the two of them remembered.

Contrasting with this unsatisfying sort of reminiscence about himself, and serving as an antidote to it, were his talks with Maud. They could recall only a few incidents in that garden, but they remembered their life there; and that was enough. And this contrast between the things others could tell them about and the things they could tell others, between the remembered and the unremembered, served to set in higher relief the dividing line between two worlds—the world of the grown-ups and that other world in which he and she had lived and moved and had their being. The effect of all which was to work in more deeply upon Maud the sense of a peculiar and unique relationship. She was the key to this whole happy and fulfilling present. It was she who had opened the door and let him back into his own life, thereby furnishing him with a family history, a home and a mother. In her person he had found the clue to a vanished past. Only through her had he come to his rightful and destined future. A strange thing to happen, no doubt—strange and almost unheard-of! And yet all quite simple and in the natural course of events.

So that, more than once, when she saw Gilbert walking in the garden with his mother, his arm about her and his whole manner showing that his greatest desire in life had been fulfilled, she looked on with a sense of proprietorship, as if she, in truth, were the mother of this whole state of affairs.

He had, in turn, brought something back to her. The two of them were the only survivors of a lost world. In that garden they had begun the world together, the Adam and Eve of a creation that is always new. They were contemporaries of a great and golden era; past proprietors of a universe that was separate from all others; mutual under-

standers of its inner secret. Only through him could she now meet herself as she then was, entering the garden again and finding the one to welcome her and tell her it was all true. And Maud knew that, as well as Gilbert now knew his mother and she him, and as familiar as they might be with one another, *theirs* was still a separate and different department in life. Thus Maud might look at the matter from a thousand points of view. And the more she looked at it the more she saw that it was so.

As for Gilbert's way of seeing her, it was similar but even more magical. Maud was the only person in this newly inherited world with whom he did not, in some sense, need to become acquainted. Strange as it might seem, it was none the less true. He already knew her. It was she who had introduced him into this house and stood sponsor for him. It was because she was "Maudie." And while it might come over him overpoweringly at times that she was the charming Miss Thomas—the beautiful and elusive and unattainable Miss Maud Thomas—this feeling would soon be put to rout by another part of his nature. It was the stout self-assertion of the little Gilly within him. If he was ever little Gilly, then she was his Maud. And in those days it took more than an angel to scare him away.

It is not hard to understand how his early idealization of her persisted in all its power. And how, even after he had begun to regard her as a young lady and to go about with her amid all the affairs of a commonplace world, that golden atmosphere continued to wrap her round. Those little shoes that she used to wear never *did* get to be mere store shoes bought on Main street and sponged over with a very commercial quality of gold. They were still the golden sandalage of a playmate straight from Heaven. And everything about her, both then and now, betokened a being who brought with her into this life a more than usual share of the angelic nature. It was an impression he could not quite get rid of.

For how could he forget a past that had proved to be such a reality? And besides, there was little about the young lady herself to help him get rid of it. Rather her whole manner and way of speech, and the remembered look that he could still see in her eyes, were calculated to intensify the impression and lead him into entire confusion.

To Alida and Cousin John it became increasingly apparent that a courtship was going on. It was also apparent that Maud was quite unconscious of that relation. For certainly if Maud had looked on it in the light of a courtship she would not have made herself so free about running over to Aunty Orr's every time she came to Zanesville. She would not have prolonged her visits, accepting invitations to stay all night; she would not, in short, have gone after Gilly continually and taken him about with her to all sorts of places. For who ever heard of the young lady making calls upon the young man and taking *him* about?

It would seem that she had begun with him just where they left off in the garden so many years ago. He was just Gilly whom she had known "longer than anybody else." And it would not be for even so frank and simple a person as Cousin John to betray any consciousness of the unusualness of their ways. Although, as Cousin John regarded love as a sacred and solemn thing (though none the less romantic for that) he felt more satisfied in his mind on those afternoons when Maud and Gilbert, having gone for a walk, settled down to visit on a seat in the cemetery. This way of courting a young lady met with his particular approval.

For the first week after Gilbert's return, Maud did not go back down the river to the Lookout as she had planned, but transferred her visit from the Howards to the Orrs. Alida was very insistent upon her staying; and it seemed to be the sentiment of all concerned that as it was she who had brought Gilbert and introduced him, it would be very "nice"

for her to spend a week at the place in Abram and see him settled in his new relations.

At the end of this week of reconstruction Maud became suddenly conscious that she had a father to look after. What with the five days at the Howards' and the week at the Orrs' she had been "treating Papa shamefully," and she made all haste to get back to the Lookout. After an absence of nine days, during which time she had presumably made amends for her truancy, she appeared in Zanesville again and spent her time between that place and Abram. Then followed that period of introducing Gilbert all about and going with him on daily excursions to places which he ought to know; and finally the ripening of her cherished plan to take him down to the Lookout by way of the river and give him that larger introduction to the Valley itself.

Thus it was that, on the forenoon of a propitious summer day, Gilbert found himself sitting on the cabin deck of the *Valley Queen* while the panorama of the Muskingum unwound itself before him. Maud, having her own notions of river travel, had chosen chairs at the very stern of the boat quite close to the high splashboard—a situation which, besides being roomy and retired, protected them from the too brisk breeze which was moving down the river. It was cosy and comfortable after the manner of a backyard with a tight board fence, and all the more pleasant in its mental effects from the sound of the water being flung from the big stern-wheel against the other side of that thin partition. But the main advantage, as Gilbert soon discovered, was that this neighboring cataract enabled them to talk in ordinary tones without being generally overheard.

By the time they had seen a few miles of the Hudson of the West, they became deeply engaged upon a problem which, being of a subtle, psychologic nature, did not promise to be very quickly solved. Closely considered, the proposition

was inconsistent but nevertheless a fact—namely—That the friends we feel most bound to are not the ones we have met the oftenest and mingled with the most, but the ones who date back the farthest. If, for instance, you have known a person fifteen years but have seen him only occasionally or hardly at all during that time, you feel that he is more truly an old friend of yours than some one you have seen much more of in the course of three or four years. Which would seem to show that time itself has a power of ripening friendship, and keeps on with its work of binding you to a person in the absence of the person himself. And while this might seem contrary to all logic, it was still a fact. Which fact Maud now illustrates and fortifies by citing instances among her own large circle of friends. This leads into detailed account of her exact relations and sentiments toward this person and that (all of which serves incidentally to widen Gilbert's knowledge of people whom he is destined to meet); and this way of considering takes them far afield among all sorts and conditions of friends, but always swings back to the original point of departure. At which point the fact is as far from being explained as ever; but remains a fact notwithstanding and nevertheless.

Owing to the large number of Maud's acquaintances, and the fine distinctions between friend and friend, it is a theme which might easily occupy them all the way to the Lookout, especially as there are so many scenes ashore which have to be attended to in passing. These interruptions are so frequent that the subject proper can only get ahead by a process of "As I was just starting to say." There were hills to be noted and named, the famous crossing of Morgan's Raiders to be duly considered, and a raging dam to be approached by the *Valley Queen* and safely gotten around by ingenious work at the locks. The Muskingum, Maud explains, is the only navigable river in Ohio, and much more reliable in summer than the Ohio river itself; but it is such a steep

river, and requires so many dams and locks to make it the only navigable river in the state, that the *Valley Queen* is virtually going down-stairs all the way to its mouth.

The passing of the locks, being new to Gilbert's experience, interested him. He heard the roaring of a dam rising above the watery tumult of the wheel; and when he looked up the *Valley Queen* seemed to be headed straight for destruction. But presently she turned shoreward and entered the gates of the lock. Here she began to sink from sight, the stone walls rising round her till all but her stacks were gone; and her cabin passengers, with no outlook but the dripping stone, found themselves becalmed at the bottom of a cistern. And then, as the lock-keeper walked round and round at the end of his long sweep, the farther gates swung open like barn doors, disclosing a new prospect of scenery and letting the boat out on a lower level of the river. Whereupon the *Valley Queen* got into full career again, the black bituminous smoke flaunting from her stacks, her stern wheel turning over with a surge like a small Niagara, and two long, limpid lines radiating from her prow ultimately to break and kick up a sea along the shore. A knot of boy swimmers came forth as usual to take advantage of the temporary ocean. And again the scenery commanded attention, the channel meandering through a friendly company of hills, at once wild and pastoral, and opening up to the eye at every turn a still more pleasing arrangement of the picture.

Maud, having been interrupted in the midst of some confidences concerning her cousin Will (the silence of the lock competing ineffectually with the noise of the dam) now set forth on the more placid waters to bring her story to its end.

But in the meantime something had happened. During the time the boat was down in the lock there had come back to Gilbert a memory of that time in the hospital when he thought he was banished to the lower regions. When the

engines ceased working and the boat began sinking there was a general silence among the passengers; and in this time of silence, as he sat gazing at the dripping stone slowly rising before him, there came over him, by some power of sinister suggestion, a recurrence of the lone horror he had felt in that dank and hueless Hell. The silence of that experience had been so full of deep and awful meaning, and yet so baffling to his understanding, that even this suggestion of it was enough to throw him back into the mood again. It gave him something to think about. And now that he was out in the open again, and did not have to sit and stare at those wet walls, the mood still clung to the edges of his mind and held him as by some magic of unfathomed meaning.

Maud, being unaware of this, and having no knowledge that he had ever passed through such experience in the hospital, supposed that his preoccupation was due to some new interest in the scenery. She therefore gave over her chatter about friends and relatives and joined him in his silent contemplation of the hills.

There had been few occasions, since he came into this new way of life, when anything from the War arose to haunt him. The War had somehow been assimilated—taken in and stored away among the memories of things he had seen and done. He sometimes thought he should have learned some great lesson from it. It should have left him with some supreme insight which he could put in words. But it did not resolve itself in words. To all appearances his part in "this man's war" had all resolved itself into a few exhilarating experiences which he sometimes told about. Mainly, however, it had left him with a great capacity to greet a "buddy" when he saw one. The sight and scenes of battle had become great matters of fact, duly gone through. The direst demands upon human nature had been met and risen to with new-found states of mind and being; and when it was over the mind had righted itself and gone on

its accustomed course. It all went in with worldly experience and a little further knowledge of himself. Such is the power of youth to absorb adventure!

It was somewhat different, however, with that queer experience in the hospital. And especially with that hour or moment (he could not tell which) when he had been down in the cold, gray gloom of that lonesome Hell, that nether Nowhere of existence. This did not assimilate. It did not catalogue itself among the things that a man thinks and sees and does. Whenever his memory went back to it, the atmosphere of that place came into existence again. And with it came that dread and ominous quiet, and that gloating spirit of Treason in whose murky and limitless dungeon he seemed to be confined. There was some great thought that seemed to be rife in that silence; but what it was he could hardly conceive. Possibly the lessons that the war should have taught him—unperceived depths of human perfidy—had reserved themselves to that moment to unload their weight upon him. He could not tell; that silence was uninterpretable. It was simply Hell. And the worst of it was that he had been put down there by the artful trickery of his friends —those strangers who *pretended* to be his friends! And it was the sickening realization of their perfidy that constituted his punishment in that most secret and ominous chamber of Hell. And always, in that sceneless and clammy abode of treason, he was destined to remain! He had come out of that state, somehow, by steps which he could not remember. What the explanation of it might be—whether a miscalculation in giving the ether or something else—made no difference to him. All he knew was that the experience had been true as it was inconceivable. He could imagine no actual experience in life which would be so tragically disappointing and give him such a sinking around the heart. He had come out of it to find a new desire within him—his mother. It was a desire born of his revulsion from all treason and be-

trayal. And, to make it all the more authentic, he found that he had had a strange word on his lips. Thus it was that that great reality, the war, which he had met and risen to and put behind him seemed more or less a memory and a dream; and that other thing, which should have been a dream and a delusion, came back as the great reality.

Feeling that it was foolish to be so easily reminded of that experience, and a weakness to give way to these thoughts simply because he had been gazing at a gray stone wall, he put the memory aside and continued to chat with Maud about the Muskingum. He had never told her about this part of his adventures. He massed it in with other states of mind which had carried him "over the top" and through other things that were as well not analyzed or spoken of. Why should this nightmare of existence be obtruded upon her? Why should such thoughts be allowed to step in and make themselves a part of his present way of life?

In Maud's company he seemed to overleap all wars and go back to the world as it was. With her he could almost become a child again. But when he looked at her from another standpoint, and thought of all the things he ought not to tell her, he felt as if the war had made him old. And why impose that age, that way of inner oldness, upon her?

Still despite these inhibitions, he felt that these things might some day be a part of her business—a friend's business. He wondered how much she might be able to enter into such things—not by experience, of course, but out of a woman's intuitions. Sometime he might tell her about those deep inward adventures, partially and lightly, and merely by way of feeling that he had given her his whole friendship. But not now. That was another thing to be thought over. And he continued to think it over in the interims of their talk.

In one of these little silences, when he was engaged upon

this new phase of matters, the *Valley Queen* jangled her engine bell and veered toward the shore.

"Here we are," exclaimed Maud, rising from her chair. "They are going to stop for us. This is our landing."

Gilbert lost no time in gathering up Maud's luggage and his own and taking his place with her near the end of the staging, now swinging out like a suspended sidewalk and feeling for the shore. It was very evident that the landing was being made for their sole benefit. There was no freight-shed or other indication of a town in sight. The landing consisted merely of a narrow margin of shore at the foot of a green range of bluff which ran almost straight up to where it stopped against the sky. A path, hardly visible, meandered along its face and lost itself amid the growth of trees and underbrush, but came out somewhere and somehow at the top.

When the swinging sidewalk of the Valley Queen had made a junction with this sandy sidewalk of the shore, Gilbert and Maud hurried down its length closely followed by two deck-hands bearing between them the single consignment of freight. This was a red lawn settee, which, as everybody aboard seemed to know, was on its way to an artist who had his studio up above.

The deck-hands, having deposited this useful piece of furniture beside the two passengers, hurried aboard again; whereupon the *Valley Queen,* whose wheel had made a mighty tumult to give Maud and Gilbert the advantages of a full stop, put her engines forward with a long sigh and went sweeping down the river.

The two, instead of beginning the climb at once, stood a while watching the *Valley Queen* as she receded down the river, throwing up a white cataract behind her and drawing out her long train of smoke. Then they sat down on the settee.

Behind them was the wooded wall of hill; in front of

them the smooth expanse of water. The settee, coming off the boat with them and being set down beside them in this deep cosiness between wood and water, was a special providence too pointed to be neglected. It was a trysting place guarded by all the forces of nature. They remained sitting as if by mutual understanding of the natural advantages.

Gilbert was again thinking. That memory of soul imprisonment which the locks had brought back to him was the very opposite of all that he experienced in her company. That was Hell and this was Happiness. The two stood forth by contrast. He had a notion to tell her about it by way of expressing his appreciation of the present. But he would not.

But still, as Maud was a girl of depth, and as she was the daughter of a doctor, there was no sense in regarding her entirely as a creature of another world. She knew a great deal; and she was not one who had spared herself in any of the realities of life. Why should he not be honest with her?

He accordingly confided to her his thoughts in passing through the lock. He explained, not too seriously, its instant suggestion of an experience he had when he was "unconscious" in the hospital. He thought he was down in hell.

"In hell?" she queried. "Do you mean fire and brimstone? And fear and pain?"

"No, worse. Not that kind of pain. Nor fear either. It was the pain of realization. Human beings had been worse than I thought they were. I had been betrayed; and I was down in that gloomy place all alone. It was the pain of knowing—if you know what that means."

"You were depressed—in a low state," she said. "And what happened then?"

"Nothing. Just that. That was enough. When I came to the memory of it was still with me; and it was then I

had the desire to find my mother. I felt that she was the opposite of all that, you know."

"Yes."

"And that," he went on, "is the sort of value I place upon my mother. I found her in that way. She was a refuge from—experience. I believe I value her more than if I had known her all the time. And you too."

Gilbert's confession was not destined to go farther at this time. It was broken in upon by no less a person than Ike, the Christmans' hired man, who, not being inclined to give warning to lovers, and being barefoot as well, stood before them as suddenly as an apparition, with a broad grin on his face.

Ike's lean features, especially in the neighborhood of his mouth, had the stretching qualities of dental rubber, so that his smile was almost without limit; and this stretch in the lower part of his face seemed to be accomplished at the expense of his eyes, closing them to two gray piercing points which, in the present case, seemed to be very much aware that Maud and Gilbert had been sitting close together.

Evidently he had come to get the settee. Seeing which the two rose at once and stepped aside from his property. And then, as Ike stood figuring on the best way to manage the burden, Gilbert took hold of one end and offered to help him up the hill. Upon this development of affairs, Ike "calculated" that it had not been necessary to disturb Miss Thomas at all; she could just keep her place on the settee and they would save her a long, hard climb. Gilbert seconded the motion.

Maud, not to be daunted by this humorous proposal, placed herself in the exact middle of the settee, and her two bearers took her up. She had supposed that they would find it impossible to handle her on the steepest and most difficult parts of the path; and their having to acknowledge defeat

would be the point of the joke. Traveling by chair proved to be more practicable than she expected; the two men met every difficulty with great engineering skill; and as this robbed the adventure of its humorous outcome she insisted upon being set down. Her insistence counted for nothing, however, until she put a very serious look and made dire threats to jump; whereupon, having reached a point about midway to the top, they put down the settee, and all sat upon it to rest and enjoy the prospect.

The lanky and sinewy Isaac, feeling that he had now made himself a rightful member of the party, took his place next to Maud and joined in the conversation—not without that knowing air which all the world adopts when it thinks it has detected a pair of lovers. He sang the praises of the Muskingum quite as romantically as they, and finally he got around to more domestic affairs.

"Miss Thomas," he offered, "I guess that old Nep of yours is waiting for you somewheres up there. Anyway, I seen him sitting in the path with a piece of chain hanging to his collar."

"What! Was he tied up again?" she asked.

"Yes. She tied him to a tree. Something he couldn't break. But when he heard the steamboat whistle that chain wasn't *nawthin'*."

"Well, I declare," commented Maud, evidently intending to carry the conversation no further.

"Doesn't he like to be chained up?" inquired Gilbert.

"Oh, that isn't it," answered Maud. "He is very obedient. Why, I can tie him with a piece of string—just a piece of white string—and he will stay there all day. He won't move till I come and untie him."

"Haw-haw-haw," put in Isaac, his mouth stretching to an extent that was alarming. "The first time I seen that I like to a-died laughing. Just a piece of white string tied around a tree. And him layin' there all day thinkin' he was

tied. And him intended to be hauling coal cars in the mines!"

"Oh, he knows very well he can get away," protested Maud. "It is just a formality with him. He is very obedient. But of course when he is expecting *me* back it is different. And when he hears the boat he gets excited."

"That all comes from belonging to a girl that can whistle," said Isaac. "He has got an ear for whistling. And when he is expecting you back on the river I guess he thinks the boat does your whistling for you. He thinks everything is you."

"No he doesn't," said Maud. "He can tell our car from others so far off that he can't see us—though I don't know how. So naturally he knows when the boat is coming. And when he is expecting me he gets excited."

"Haw-haw," continued Isaac, his eyes again shrinking to narrow slits as his mouth stretched. "I should say he does get excited! She says he has been layin' in front of the fireplace just lookin' up the chimbly and thinkin' of you for two days. He was beginnin' to get worried about you. So when the whistle blew he just r'ared back *once*. And that chain wasn't nawthin'."

"What did she chain him up for?" asked Maud.

"Cleanin'," said Isaac. "She got a cleanin' spell. When she found you was goin' to have a young gentleman for company she got extra pertickler and she had me come over and beat the rug where Nep had been layin' and thinkin' about you. So I beat it and brushed it till I got all the hair out that he left in front of the fireplace. And then, when she put him out, he rambles round restless like and finally he comes into the kitchen and walks all over the brand-new scrubbing. So then she hunted up a chain and tied him to a tree. And now he is sittin' up there in the path somewheres hopin' it is going to be you."

Maud, not knowing to what lengths this revelation of

domestic affairs might be carried, especially in its reference to Mrs. Parker's preparations for "company," shut off the garrulous Isaac by suggesting that they now resume their climb. "That is, if you two are rested," she added.

The effect of this was immediate; for as they had just been protesting that her weight had not tired them at all, they now made good their claim by picking up the settee. And so, with Maud now leading the way, they continued upward till they suddenly came out on the general level of the country with its wide prospect of wooded hills.

Here, to Maud's relief, Isaac flung the settee up on his head and took his own particular route, leaving them to follow their own path down the river.

In the middle distance was a black, shaggy figure sitting in the path. And farther along, at the edge of a clump of trees, they could see the red roof and pillared porch of the Lookout.

CHAPTER XII

Maud's big Newfoundland dog, having thrown himself back and snapped the chain, pursued his way down the path that led to the fringe of trees along the bluff. When he had gone half the distance he sat down. He knew that when she departed by way of the path she was likely to return by the same route; and the sound of the whistle always preceded her arrival. In which case there was never a chain originally intended for a dog that could withstand his determination to go and meet her.

But the whistle did not always bring her. Sometimes it blew on several successive days without producing the results he hoped for. Therefore there was doubt; and this doubt seemed to be reflected in his conservative way of going after her. Dogs do not like to make mistakes. Consequently, when Maud and her company appeared over the edge of things they saw him sitting in the distance with the broken chain dangling from his neck, watchfully waiting.

As he was expecting only one person instead of three, and as these three were considerably mixed up with some sort of a red object, he was very much puzzled. Then, as two figures separated themselves and came up the path on which he was sitting, his sage head went a little higher and his attention became even more fixed. Being a dog, he must either be ready for a joyous welcome or else be ready to bite; and like the rest of his tribe he would not make a move till he had come to a final decision. And being near-sighted, like all dogs, and not being one of those that have the gift of scent, he was transfixed with suspense.

Maud, seeing his perplexity from afar, waved her hand and called. The effect of this was instantaneous. He came

bounding down the path, his speed increasing with every leap. Suddenly, as he brought up before her, he reared on his hind legs and planted both paws squarely on her shoulders with the amiable intention of licking her face.

Cuffs and reprimands followed this forgetfulness of his manners. Then stern finger-shakings and instructions for the future (which seemed to be taken with due seriousness) tempered by pattings on the head and less unkindly remarks by way of making up. Having thus quelled him and at the same time restored him to grace, she bade him come along; whereupon he took his place beside her and subsided into his usual steady-going and faithful demeanor.

"Very evidently he belongs to you," remarked Gilbert.

"Yes. But sometimes he forgets himself and thinks that I belong to him." And after a moment's reflection she added, "Though I suppose I ought not to blame him for that. I did used to belong to him. Then, too, that's the difference between the little dogs and the big, curly kind. With the little breeds the dog belongs to the children. But with the big ones the children belong to the dog."

"I wouldn't wonder if that were a pretty good scientific classification," suggested Gilbert.

"Yes, it is," she answered seriously. "These big ones are life savers. And they've always got it on their mind."

"But hardly a classification that a zoologist—like your father, for instance—would admit of."

"Oh, yes he would," she protested. "At least for family purposes. You know, when I was little I used to come home with all sorts of dogs. I made a lot of trouble that way. So when I was still in short dresses, and had recently learned to swim, Papa came home with a big, black-and-white dog. He was big and strong, but he was only a pup. And mostly feet. He said that this one was a Newfoundland and his name was Nep. And when I wanted to know what kind of a dog that was—bird or rat or rabbit—he said it was just

a child dog. I remember him saying that. Then he opened up Nep's paws and showed me that he was web-footed. And he said that God made him that way for the especial benefit of girls who go in swimming. So you see Papa is quite a zoologist."

"Is he really web-footed?" queried Gilbert, looking down skeptically at Neptune's large, powerful paws.

"Why yes." And Nep was brought to a halt while she picked up one of the feet and spread it out to demonstrate the fact. "Didn't you know they were web-footed?"

"I never had much experience with a child dog, as you call him" (she here gave him a quick, understanding look), "though I have always been fond of dogs. And when I was over in France I saw a good many interesting war dogs of various breeds. That's where the dog came into his own. A collie is a pretty shrewd lot. He is a sort of spy dog."

"Well, Nep would hardly do for a spy dog. He is right open and aboveboard—a regular old sea-dog. He goes at everything straightforward and depends upon his strength. He is honest and big-hearted; that's why I like him. He is a good deal like Papa in that way."

"Does he still go swimming with you?"

"Who? Nep or Papa?"

"Nep."

"He does when I let him. He still has the idea of taking care of me and saving my life. And sometimes he is a nuisance."

"Then you don't need your life saved any more?"

"Not steadily and as a regular thing. Though I might not object upon occasion."

"I have often wondered," said Gilbert, after a while of silence, "why we do not see more dogs like that. I can hardly remember when I saw a Newfoundland before. Is it because they eat too much?"

"Partly. Though they do not eat so much as people think. And partly on account of their hair. Curly hair is pretty but it is hard to keep clean. And then they don't hunt or herd sheep. They're just friends. But there used to be a great many of them around here."

"On account of the water?"

"No. On account of the mines."

"Oh! They were useful in the mines!"

"Just think," exclaimed Maud, "of a dog having to spend all his life down in the earth that way. Nothing but the dismal-looking coal around him and a miner with a little torch. And all the dust and dirt in his long hair. Nep's father and mother were both mine dogs. You know some of the best coal is in rather narrow seams—not much head-room. So it has always been hauled out to the main shaft by dogs with little railway cars. Nep's ancestors have been mining coal for generations."

"A man at that business leads a 'dog's life,'" suggested Gilbert.

"Yes. But I have often thought it must be especially hard on *water* dogs," said Maud, sticking to her point. "They are not fitted for dust and dirt. Some of them have been doing that so long that you would think they would forget all about water and get to be just mine dogs. But they don't; they're water dogs still. A dog like that will hardly ever have a day off except on Sundays; and he will know nothing about water except occasionally when he goes in swimming with his miner to wash off the coal dust. But if you take a dog like that—or a pup out of a litter of such dogs—he will go right back to being a swimmer and a life-saver just as if he had never known anything else. It goes to show how long it must have taken the human race to develop all the different breeds of dog. That is, if men really made them that way instead of God. And Papa says that is the theory."

All of which conversation—and more like it—would seem to be leading nowhere, and was no doubt quite superfluous. Unless we were to consider that all real conversation usually *is* leading somewhere. It cannot very well help it. But for our present purposes it is sufficient to know that it led them past the clump of shade trees and up the steps to the porch of the Lookout.

Having arrived at this point, Nep, who had been walking between them, hurried ahead and looked up at the door-knob. Then he sat down and placed his nose to the crack of the door.

Upon noting his expectations, Maud, instead of opening the door, placed a finger to her lips and stood a while in thought.

"Now I *will* have to chain him up," she said. "And his chain is broken."

"Couldn't you tie him with a piece of white string?" inquired Gilbert.

"Well, yes, I could *usually*. But not now. You see I have just come back; and he has been waiting for me a long time. He expects to come in with me. He will sit here and scratch the varnish off the door if I don't let him. And if I take him round to see Mrs. Parker and find where the rest of the chain is he will want to go in that way. And then he will walk all over her scrubbing."

Again she took thought.

"I wonder," she finally suggested, "whether you would mind holding him while I go round and arrange things?"

"But will he consent to be held?" asked Gilbert. A most pertinent inquiry.

"Oh, yes. He knows you belong with me now. He notices such things. He will obey you if I tell him. All you have to do is to take hold of his collar and keep him reminded. He means to do right but he gets to thinking about me."

In pursuance of this advice Gilbert sat down on the bottom step holding what was left of the chain. And Nep, having received full instructions and a parting admonition from Maud, consented to sit down and be held.

As Maud had to report her arrival to Mrs. Parker, and explain at length what she had done with her young man, and then find a certain tree and sit down to work out the problems of a knotted chain (a case where the undoing was much harder than the doing), she did not return immediately. Meanwhile Gilbert was making out very well with the dog. Nep, after being "reminded" only once that he was disobeying, sat down again and looked expectant. He was, indeed, a faithful and well-intentioned dog; he had a sage eye and big, powerful paws; and there was such an overplus of fine fealty in his whole make-up that the record of it seemed to break out in flourishes all over his curly body. And Gilbert, seeing him in the light of Maud's dog, and noting that Nep was deeply engaged in dog thought, sat meditating upon his big, noble head.

Into this quiet pool of thought, seemingly so far removed from all dire happening, a strange missile was about to hurl itself.

From somewhere within the house, or from the other side of it, there came a voice, piercing, raucous, inhuman. It repeated several phrases that did not interpret themselves. And shortly after came the words—if they were words—*Penang, penang, penang.*

Gilbert dropped the chain and came to his feet. The dog, interpreting the suddenness of the move as meaning danger, jumped up also, emitting a deep growl. Then, seeing no enemy in sight, he looked up at his new master as if for further orders; and with a dog's deep aptitude for reading mental states, he added to his threats with several short barks.

Maud, hearing the growls and catching the businesslike

meaning in the barks, came hurrying around to find what was the matter. As she reached the corner of the house and saw the roused spirit of the dog and the fixed attitude of Gilbert she came to a stop, holding the rest of the chain in her hand.

"Why, what's the matter?" she asked.

"What was that?" inquired Gilbert.

"What?"

"That voice."

"Oh! Was *that* what he was barking at! Why Nep! Haven't you any more sense than to bark at Miggy? You foolish dog!"

She naturally supposed it was the dog that had taken alarm. She admonished him humorously. Whereupon Nep, seeing that he was being chaffed, sat down again and looked cheap and propitiating after the manner of a dog that has made a mistake.

Upon Gilbert, however, her easy attitude had no such immediate effect.

"Who is Miggy?" he asked.

"Why, that's Grandpa Thomas's parrot. Miguel."

Gilbert slowly sat down beside the dog. Rather, he subsided to his seat on the step—as if what little support he had were being gradually taken away from him. But the look on his face did not change materially. Rather he was more perplexed, if anything. That strange word, ringing like a tocsin out of the depths of his hospital experience, was none the less confusing because it was the word of a parrot.

"Do you remember Miggy?" she asked.

Gilbert shook his head. "I have heard the word before," he said. "But I did not know it was a parrot's word. Though maybe I did. I don't know."

Having started with a misapprehension, Maud was a little slow in correcting her impression that it was the man and not the dog that had been affected by the parrot's words.

And when she did see that it was Gilbert who had taken alarm, she quite naturally misunderstood its nature. As she had little knowledge of that weird background of hospital experience, and no conception whatever of that haunted chamber of his mind to which *Penang* had made itself the password and the key, she supposed his state of mind was due merely to his having been surprised by an early recollection. Seeing that it baffled him, and thinking that he could collect his thoughts more readily if he were left alone, she fastened the chain to the several links on Nep's collar and led him away to be tied.

When she returned he was still sitting on the step in a spell of thought.

"Do you remember him now?" she asked.

"No. It wasn't the parrot; it was the *word* that struck me. I do not remember any parrot."

"Then let us go in. Possibly you will recall him after you have seen him."

She led the way into the living room and thus into the presence of Miggy. This feathered personage, a gray African parrot of a species which, as Maud explained, has great powers of speech, was not now inclined to exercise those powers even for the benefit of company. Having so recently expressed his opinion, and being all out of subject matter, he was now wholly engaged in sitting on his perch and looking wise. Gilbert, who had expected to see a green parrot and had no remembrance of a gray one, looked Miggy over without coming to any basis of understanding. He took the chair which Maud offered him and sat down; but without interrupting for a moment his study of the bird.

"I can't remember," he said. "What else can he say?"

"He has quite a vocabulary," said Maud. "Some of his sayings are sea terms. He says 'Gangway there, gangway' and 'Man the pumps' and 'Penang.' "

"Why does he say *Penang?*"

"A sailor must have taught it to him. Probably in the Malay Peninsula. Grandfather Thomas, who died twenty-one years ago, had him over twenty years; and he got him from an old friend, a sea-captain at Baltimore, who had him for years and took him all over the world with him. Miggy has been a great traveler in his day. He is over sixty years old."

"Over sixty!"

"Yes. They sometimes live to be a hundred, even in confinement."

"That's a lot of life to waste on a bird," remarked Gilbert.

"That's what Grandma Thomas used to say—especially after Grandpa died. He has outlived Grandpa and the sea-captain, and now he has outlived her. He has outlived everybody he first belonged to. So you see we don't know where he got some of his terms. They are too far back. Sometimes he makes himself a nuisance; but we are so used to him we keep him anyway. He is a sort of heirloom."

"I should say he was," remarked Gilbert. "Why, he must have been forty years old when I was born."

"You and Grandma Thomas would have got along famously together," said Maud. "She used to say that she had no objection to a bird living a hundred years providing he would only keep still about it. But Miggy is always reminding you of it by saying things you never taught him and things that you do not *understand*. When Papa was a little boy one of the first things he learned to say was *Penang*. That and *Man the pumps*. He learned it from Miggy. We sometimes think he might have got his bent for zoology from Miggy. You can never tell what a child is going to pick up."

"But ought *I* to know him?" asked Gilbert. "And why don't I remember him?"

"You *could* have known him," answered Maud. "I have been trying to figure that out. Grandfather Thomas, who

lived over on the other side of town, died about the time you went away to Texas. He had been sick abed for several weeks. And just at that time Miggy was very stubborn and ill behaved. It was a time when he should have been quiet; but Grandma Thomas did not have much influence with him. She could not make him keep still. Miggy must have known there was something wrong about the house; or maybe he was excited by people coming and going. Anyway he became very disagreeable, and Grandma Thomas, in order to have quiet, put him in his cage and brought him over to us. When we first got Miggy we only took him over temporarily—until Grandfather should get well. After he was left with us he became more disobedient than ever. He would squawk and talk and say everything he ever knew. When he became so ill-behaved Mother chastised him, and he bit her on the finger. So then, partly to chastise him and partly to get rid of his noise, Father put him on his perch and took him up to the third story—an unfinished part of the house that was used as an attic. Miggy was left there for some time, with the window opened up at the top so that he could get fresh air and see out.

"After Miggy was left alone up there he did nothing *but* talk. He seemed to forget everything else and went right back to *Penang*. And for several days he kept *penanging* away so that you could hear him all over the neighborhood. That was about the time you and I were playing together. You must have been able to hear him up in your garden."

"I see," said Gilbert. "That could account for my knowing the word without recalling the bird. It seemed to be a word that I had got in some such way—right out of the air. And without connection or meaning."

"Or you might easily have learned it from me," added Maud. "I used to imitate Miggy when I was little."

Gilbert, upon turning both theories over in his mind, was partial to the latter. He preferred to think it was *Maud's*

word, and that it had come to him from her. This point of view helped divest the word of its uncanny power to remind him of Hell—in which connection it was a word that had altogether too much meaning—and force it back into the world where it belonged. At the same time it was a parrot's word; and this knowledge of its origin helped clear his mind of one haunting mystery, at least.

For this relief he felt considerable gratitude toward Miggy. But he had to look over a good many times before he could become comfortably settled in the fact that that ominous *Penang,* with all its burden of heart-sickening experience, had found its explanation in a bird. And a bird that belonged to Maud!

CHAPTER XIII

During that afternoon Doctor Thomas was not very much in evidence. Only once, in what proved to be a spare interval between measles and rheumatoid arthritis, did he put in his appearance; and after passing some jovial remarks with Snooks, in all which family banter her young man felt himself included while at the same time no formal notice was taken of his presence, the doctor went hurrying off again in his dust covered runabout. Papa, Maud said, was not making much of a success of retiring. By moving out of his old territory he had escaped much minor practice, though they still came after him in many cases. But since he had "retired" down the river, the country people, conscious of whom they had among them, brought all their ailments to his door. By moving to the Lookout he had simply become a medical missionary; but that helped the matter a great deal as it put a new phase on his work. He could refuse a call if he wished. But he never wished. And in Maud's opinion he never would.

Gilbert found himself fully employed in forming the acquaintance of the library, the grounds, the kitchen garden and the flowers; and finally, after a walk up-river in which Nep was allowed to participate, in the inspection of a box of relics and trinkets which, as Maud told their stories, proved to be nothing less than a boxful of departed spirits —of men and women and romance and family history. So that it seemed no time at all until the afternoon was gone and the dust covered runabout brought the Doctor back with inquiries regarding supper.

In the meantime, notwithstanding such engrossing employ-

ment, *Penang* had not allowed itself to be completely forgotten. Miggy referred to it several times, most inopportunely, as if trying him out on the new definition. And each time Gilbert paused and listened, always finding in it, along with the old sense of bafflement—not so easily worn off—a new and wonderful content of meaning. From meaning nothing it had come to mean everything; and everything was full of promise. The word, denoting as it did the moment of his final release from inner mystery, seemed to mark and bring to its close an epoch of experience. He had started out to find his mother; and had done so. He had started out to find himself; and now this was fully accomplished. Miggy had a magic word; and each time he spoke it Gilbert's mind, with the luminous apprehension of a drowning man seeing the whole of life at once, would fly back to the hospital and pass history in review. Thus several times that afternoon he went back to that oppressive emptiness which he called Hell, and came forward by magic steps to this present fulfilling moment; and each time with a new wonder that every necessary fact in this new way of being had found its focus in Maud. His own life, the life of Gilbert Orr, was a thing that was lost and had to be found. And it had all been shut out till he found himself in her.

A deep sense of this ever-new fact was still upon him when, after supper, Maud proposed that they take a walk. There was a certain high headland which commanded miles of the Muskingum, now shining like silver; and on their way over she wanted to take him through a part of the old-fashioned garden, a place of tall, pointed perennials which, unlike most gardens, showed up well by moonlight.

The part of the garden to which she referred proved to be all that she said it was. It was peculiarly able to assert itself by night. Great groups of hollyhock and larkspur, with spikes of bloom six and seven feet in height, stood about in companies, their sharpened shafts of beauty pierc-

ing the moonlight as boldly as the spears of mediæval knights. They seemed to have come together as informally as a gathering of the clans; but as they stood so straight and motionless in the night, each individual was formal in itself. Here and there a white one, silver-tipt by the moonlight, distinguished itself above the others and stood transmuted in a beauty that was more than color. Underneath, unseen and all about, were hidden sources of odor—the increased effort that little flowers put forth as they become lost in the dark.

After a short visit in the garden, during which Gilbert became a staunch adherent of hollyhock and larkspur, they found their way to the beginning of a path which led across a field to their point of observation. This point, a bald and rounding promontory high above the river, was much more suited to be used as a moonlight observatory than a place to be sought out in the heat of day. Evidently it was devoted to such use. A bench had been built here facing the direction of the longest view—a far prospect of shining river with a barely audible, distant dam whose silver brink, bending as smoothly as a polished casque, performed wonders with its glimpses of the moon. Here they sat down.

The view reminded Gilbert of the night he had spent on Putnam hill. He had never told her about the inner experiences of that night. She knew only the outer facts. He now related as best he could—such a dream not easily putting itself into words—how he got to thinking of the story of Lorena; and how, in the sleep that followed, he got the person of Lorena and his mother and herself utterly confused.

"I used to think that song was just a lot of fine sentiment," he said. "Just mush. A lot of people might consider it just mush. But it isn't. It's a great song. It's true—at least as far as the man is concerned. But some time ago I wouldn't have thought that. The idea of that

man—that preacher—never getting married simply because he had fallen in love with one girl would have looked foolish to me. I would have said that there were plenty of other pretty girls in the world."

"Well, there are, aren't there?" suggested Maud.

"Yes. And there are plenty of fine mothers, too. But they are not your own. And you can't make a man think so. After a man has had his mother picked out for him it is too late."

There came a pause. And, in the nether reaches of Maud's mind, an implication. She turned sidewise on the bench, her elbow resting on its back as she looked at him; and now her eye dwelt with new interest on that stroke of shrapnel across his cheek and brow. To her mind it had not disfigured him at all. Rather it transfigured him—raising him in value at a stroke and setting a new seal of beauty upon him.

"You always thought of your mother as being beautiful, didn't you?" she inquired.

"Well, yes, I suppose so. Naturally she would look beautiful to me. Though possibly not to someone else. So I thought of her as being beautiful."

"You started to tell me this morning about that experience in the hospital. But you did not finish. What was that place like that you thought was Hell?"

"It wasn't like anything exactly," said Gilbert, not disposed to enlarge upon its gray horror. "It was empty. But there was something in it that was awful. It was not the place itself so much as the spirit of it—the idea that filled it. It was a place of treason."

"Do you mean that in a soldier's sense? Treason to one's country?"

"Not exactly that. Not treason but treachery. Deceit, lying—betrayal. A world that you don't know and can't depend upon."

"You were lonesome," said Maud. "You were in a strange country and did not have anybody of your own."

"Why—yes. Of course." He said it as if he were repeating a platitude. "I suppose I was lonesome. It's a big world to be lost in. But most people don't know that."

"Yes, I know it," said Maud quickly. "After Mother died I knew it; and Father began to depend more and more upon me. I look a great deal like Mother, you know."

"Do you mean," said Gilbert, looking at her suddenly, "that he *needs* you in that way. That he has *got you mixed up with her?*"

"Yes—in a way. Papa and I have always been great chums; and now I am old enough to understand him. I am probably more to him than I would have been if mother had not died. He says I am just like her."

"Well, I don't blame him," said Gilbert. "A man needs somebody who understands him. And as long as he has got you——"

The sentence was left to finish itself.

Suddenly he resumed:

"So you take the place of your mother! I suppose he would feel lost without you."

"Yes—naturally. That is if he really lost me."

"Maud," he said, with sudden acceleration, "you belong to *me*. I have no right to say it—I can't help saying it that way—but you do. You always *did* belong to me. I was in love with you from the beginning. I did not know it then; and for a long time I seemed to have forgotten it. But that was in another world. With you I got the world back again; and I don't want to lose it. If I had to I could wait for you forever. But I don't want to wait forever."

As he said this he put his arm about her. And for a space they sat looking down the illimitable, silvery pathway of the Muskingum.

And then, with the same impetus of feeling, he resumed:

"I always *did* love you. When you came back to me that day when I stood by the gate, it was like the return of an angel. My whole feeling toward you came back with it. With you I felt happy. I can see that I loved you then; and I love you now. And in the *same way*. You belonged to me. And you still do. I know that is no way to say it; but it is a fact. It is true. Your father ought to be able to understand that providing he would look at it as it *is*. But as for me it was all settled long ago. No other girl would do. That fact goes clear back to the garden. And now it depends upon how it is with you. Did you feel that way toward me? And do you still?"

"Yes, Gilbert," she answered, "I did. And so I do."

"Then may I tell him about it?"

"Yes. You may."

Again the moonlit silence had its way; and she felt a new pressure of his arm as they sat looking together down that shimmering pathway. And then—purely because Maud wanted to hear it all over again—she made him go back and describe each step of the morning that brought him to the white-balled gate, and the surge of deep affection that came into his heart as she came to meet him in her pink sash and golden shoes. And she quite forgave him the passion of proprietorship with which he had proposed to her, recalling as she did the watchful little tyrant whose bird's-nest could be viewed by no girl but herself. And so they talked and talked, we shall not say how long.

CHAPTER XIV

Silence had taken possession of the living-room of the Lookout. It was a silence that was pregnant and full of inter-relations. Doctor Thomas, sitting at a walnut desk in what he now called his office—a sort of medical alcove—was aware of it. Maud, sitting in the little willow rocker with some crocheting in hand—a mere excuse for sitting in that particular spot where she could look into the alcove and see her father—was aware of it. Even Nep, lying with his chin closely pressed to the rug, seemed to be aware of it.

It was, in truth, an atmosphere of awareness. The moments, setting themselves apart from time, had paused to take account of the years; and in the slight scratching of the doctor's pen on the paper one might imagine that the message was being taken down and put on record. Between whiles, when the pen stopped and waited, the silence reasserted itself in all its unusual quality, as if the Lookout living-room, on that particular morning, had become a meeting place between the past and the future.

To an outsider it would have seemed that there were but two parties to the silence. He would hardly have thought (having no means of knowing) that a third member of their company was that painting of a woman holding its place on the wall of the curtained alcove. But she was the subject of the silence. Maud knew the Doctor was thinking about her. The Doctor knew Maud was thinking about her. And each knew the other was perfectly aware of their secret.

Doctor Thomas, intermittently engaged upon the blue notepaper, may be regarded as writing a prescription for

himself, his remedy taking the form of a letter to his sister in Virginia. It was the only thing he could think of doing.

He was trying to tell her that, to his utter surprise, Maud had fallen in love; that the young man, entirely eligible and of history and habits to which no exception could be taken, was scheduled to appear that morning to ask for her hand. And that he, Doctor Thomas, was now in the position of a father watching the clock and waiting to meet this situation.

But while this covered the facts of the case it was not all that he was trying to say. Things, in addition to merely happening, sometimes have a *way* of happening which changes the whole complexion of the event. And it was the way in which the Doctor discovered what was about to take place—just as Maud was preparing herself to tell him—that brought about this all-enveloping silence, whose meaning, striking so deep into him, prompted him to take up pen and paper and try to get into touch with his nearest woman relative.

That morning, shortly after breakfast, he had gone out to take a stroll about the place and give instruction with regard to the thinning out of certain flowers. Upon coming back, unexpectedly, into his study, he found Maud standing with her back toward him, looking at her mother's picture.

About this there was nothing unusual. But upon her turning round he saw that her eyes were filled with tears. And Maud, taken by surprise, found that it was too late for her to conceal the fact. Whereupon, although she quickly wiped away the tears that were there, the situation was not bettered, for others took their place; and these other tears, coming after an interval and in fuller measure as she stood looking at him, were evidently due to sorrow that this little episode between herself and her mother had been discovered!

This indeed was unusual. In the six years since his Ruth had gone from him, Maud and he had talked her over a

thousand times; and the time was long past when thought of her was a matter of sorrow and tears. Rather, her name had become a new word of pleasure to them. Reminiscences of her were very much in order, and this was so well understood between them that an evening of music was often rewarded and made more perfect by some stories about Mother. And on those specially "cosy" evenings, not infrequent, when she sat on his knee and made him forget all about time and tide by calling him Pops, it was usually some reminiscence of what Mother said and did that was drawing them so closely together.

Hence this episode of the picture was unusual; it bore the marks of something new. It was the more surprising to him from its having so patently an element of secrecy about it. The Doctor was quite at a loss to understand this extra flow of tears.

"Why Snooks, what's the matter?"

Snooks, already laboring under a complication of emotions, the difficulties of which were hardly made less by her father stepping in and becoming the main party to be considered in a state of affairs which was quite unexplainable and which already included herself, her mother and her lover, added to the complication by trying to smile. The smile, however, was far from being a success; it was, to say the least, incongruous.

Doctor Thomas, taken aback by such an ill-sorted expression on the face of his child, dropped into his swivel chair and swung his large form around, full front, to meet the situation. To Maud it was always an inviting attitude; but she did not immediately take advantage of it.

"What is the matter, Snooks? Are you lonesome? Or what is it?"

Maud made her escape from the question by flying toward him and taking the proffered seat on his knee. And then she acted utterly differently from what she usually did when

thus ensconced. For now, instead of falling into that cosy relationship which usually established itself when she addressed him as Pops, and instead of assuring him, with her usual bantering air that he was a perfectly good "mother" (an assurance she had given him many times when they were considering the success of his dual relationship to a daughter), she simply buried her face in the side of his ample neck and refused to be seen or spoken to. Thus a considerable time elapsed.

But when the time had elapsed she sat straight up and looked him in the face, strikingly changed. Evidently she had overcome her emotions for the time being and was master of the situation. The incongruous look had gone; and in its place was a look that was sober, solicitous and almost pitying. Toward *him!* In that short time during which she had buried herself in the dark it seemed that she had undergone a change and come forth a woman. And then she told him in so many words—what she had been about to tell him anyway—that Gilbert was in love with her, and that, with her permission, he was coming that morning to ask his consent. He would probably arrive about eleven o'clock.

After which, instead of tarrying for that playful visit which usually marked their confidences together, she gave him a kiss which was more womanly and deliberate than any Snooks had ever given him, disengaged herself from his arms and left him to prepare his answer.

Only, as she was going out through the doorway, she paused and looked back at him. And again that strange, sympathetic, almost pitying look came into her eyes as she added, "I am sorry, Father, that you came in *just then.*"

When next he saw her she had got the basket of pink yarn and was sitting in the little wicker chair—her mother's chair—deliberately crocheting. She had placed herself there, as he very well knew, so that she could see around the

corner of the door-frame and keep an eye on him. And he, in turn, found it very convenient to have her where he could see her.

Recalling the remark that Maud had just made to him he began to speculate deeply upon the nature of her "just then." She had been looking at her mother. And what did she have in mind by that "just then"? As if to get the answer he turned his eyes toward the painting of his wife; and as he did so he began to think what *she* would be doing at this moment if she were still with them. The answer was not far to seek. If Ruth were still living, Maud would not now be sitting alone by the window in the living-room. Mother and daughter would be upstairs engaged in deep communion. It would be a time of confession and motherly participation—of mutual understanding and interchange of confidences. The whole affair, even before it came to his ears, would be gone over between them. And then the news would be brought to him, not by Maud but by Ruth. And he and she would come to a decision, talking it over and renewing, meanwhile, their own romance. But between mother and daughter there would be a separate and private state of affairs—conferences in which he would not be included. And the more he thought it over he saw that "just then" was always a woman's moment and not a man's.

But why had she been "sorry" to have him catch her weeping before that picture? And what was the nature of that almost commiserating look which she had given him as she went out? He saw that, too. She was sorry for him because she knew he would understand. She knew, indeed, that the picture would tell him. And so it had. For between himself and Ruth there had never been any real secrets.

Maud, restless and perturbed, did not remain constantly in the chair. She frequently went away on little errands. These appearances and disappearances had an effect upon

her father that she was unaware of. During these absences he would devote his attention to the painting on the wall. When he saw Maud come back and take her place in the wicker chair, it seemed as if the picture had come to life and left its frame. When he became lost in the study of Maud, so like her mother in every feature, and even in the way her figure filled the little wicker chair, it brought back his courting days and made him feel young. And when, after too short a stay, Maud went flitting away again and he realized it was his daughter and not his girlish wife that he had been looking at, it made him feel old.

Maud had been a wonderful substitute for that woman on the wall. She was remarkably like her, not only in face and figure and disposition, but in all those little ways and airs that were indefinably her.

And now Maud had fallen in love! For the second time in life the Doctor was confronted with the full force of that maxim, "Physician, heal thyself." The first time had been on that quiet morning when Ruth smiled at him, and died. And now it seemed—again!

Thus it was that the woman on the wall had become the subject of the silence. It was a silence that seemed to deepen and go farther and farther until it had thoughts piled up behind it like waters behind a dam. And it was in this state of affairs that Doctor Thomas turned to the blue note paper and began to share the news with his sister in Virginia.

He was trying to tell her that in the past six years he had been a fairly good "mother" to Snooks. At least she had always told him that he was; and he rather prided himself in the fact that, being a physician, and having a large experience in the workings of the human heart, he was pretty well equipped to bring up a daughter. He and Maud had always been the closest of companions, a most mutually understanding sort of father and daughter. The death of

his wife had drawn them together into a peculiar and beautiful relationship. She had been almost another Ruth to him. And she had often told him—quite of her own volition—that he was the best combined father and mother ever invented.

But the words did not seem to come together and fall out right. It was not really what he wanted to say. Whereupon he took another penful of ink and turned it loose upon the paper. And this time he unloaded just what was in it, namely—that never, in the six years since Ruth had died, had he missed her so much as now. And while he had always congratulated himself that he had always been a fairly successful "mother" to Maud, the fact was that he was *not*. No one could take the place of Ruth, either to him or to her. And now that Maud was going he had a new sense of the loss of Ruth. Her picture was now looking down at him. There was a great silence in the house. It was a silence that seemed filled with her absence.

"The young man," he continued, "is hardly the sort of fellow that I could object to. I suppose that I ought to feel glad on Maud's account. She is sure that she loves him; and that is enough. Possibly if Ruth had been here she would have seen this long before I did. And probably she would have encouraged him. I think he would have had easy sailing with her. But it took me by surprise. And when I spoke of this seeming haste to Maud she reminded me that she had known him all her life. As they were playmates when they were little, I suppose it is natural for her to look at it in that way. I can understand her point of view.

"He is the sort of young man that Ruth would no doubt have approved of. And I would have agreed with her. But in spite of this I have an unreasoning instinct for standing in his way. I suppose the trouble with me is that I am opposed to change. There comes a time of life when we

are afraid of change—do not care to gamble with what is valuable to us or give any new opening to tragedy. It is a sign that we are getting old.

"Maud says, however, that there will be no great change at all. She is going to be Snooks just the same as ever.

"Along with this Mrs. Parker has announced her intention of leaving. I never thought I would ever consider this much of a tragedy. But now her peculiar notions and peccadilloes and occasional fits of testiness—for which Maud and I have threatened to get rid of her dozens of times—will seem like a loss. She is going to live with her brother, a bachelor who needs her.

"In this state of affairs, however, Maud has come to the rescue with a Swedish woman from Chicago. She knows nothing about her except what she has learned from Gilbert Orr; but she has her mind all made up that this is the only person to run the house and look after me. It seems that Gilbert has a feeling of responsibility for her; he wants to see her permanently settled. So he has put her off on me. As a sort of recompense for the loss of Maud, I presume."

He here lifted his eyes from the paper and again looked out into the other room. Maud was gone. He looked at the clock. He saw to his surprise that it was almost eleven. He laid down the pen and went out into the living-room. He walked up and down a few times, pausing each time to look out of the window. Then he drew the leather armchair into a position that suited. Presently the gate clicked and there came a sound of sharp heel taps up the walk. It was the young man coming. Doctor Thomas sat motionless as the heel taps drew nearer and took on a different sound as they mounted the steps.

Gilbert, having seen the Doctor in the living-room, paused a moment expecting to be let in. As no one came—the Doctor sitting motionless and refusing to take this step till

the last formality had been complied with—the young man lifted the bronze knocker and made his first request:

Thump. Thump. Thump.

Whereupon Doctor Thomas rose from his chair and went to answer the knock. At the same time Miggy, who had been dozing on his perch and thinking, mayhap, of his sailing days, stepped suddenly to the other end of the perch and let out a squawk. And then, thinking it was time something was said he leaned forward and remarked:

"Hey there! Sic him, Tige! Gangway there, gangway. *Penang, Penang, Penang!*"

X 60 R
2.50